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THE

Life of Christ

BY

The Rev. Henry Rutter. D.D.



THE

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THE

LIFE, DOCTRINE, AND SUFFERINGS

OF

OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST;

AS RECORDED BY

THE FOUR EVANGELISTS:

WITH

MORAL REFLECTIONS, CRITICAL ILLUSTRATIONS, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY

THE REVEREND HENRY RUTTER,

Author of the Key to the Old Testament, &c.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR;

Adorned with Elegant Engravings,

AND PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF MOST OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY IN THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

CONTAINING:

I.—THE EVANGELICAL HISTORY BEFORE JESUS'S PUBLIC MINISTRY; COMPRISING THE SPACE OF ABOUT THIRTY YEARS.

II.—THE TRANSACTIONS OF TWELVE MONTHS, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST PASSOVER TILL THE SECOND.

III.—THE TRANSACTIONS OF TWELVE MONTHS, FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD PASSOVER.

IV.—AN ACCOUNT OF CHRIST'S DISCOURSES AND MIRACLES FROM THE THIRD PASSOVER TILL THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES IN THE SAME YEAR.

V.—AN ACCOUNT OF CHRIST'S DISCOURSES AND MIRACLES FROM THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES TO THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

VI.—THE ACTIONS & DISCOURSES OF CHRIST, FROM THE FOURTH PASSOVER, TO HIS TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

"This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." JOHN xvii. 8.

"Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who, his own self, bore our sins in his body upon the tree; that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice; by whose stripes you were healed." 1 PETER ii. 21, &c.

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TO

JESUS CHRIST,

WHO IS TRULY THE GREAT HIGH-PRIEST, HOLY, INNOCENT, UNDEFILED, SEPARATED FROM SINNERS;

TO THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON,

WHO IS IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER, IN WHOM ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE;

TO THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD,

WHO HATH LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD;

TO THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN,

WHO HATH BLOTTED OUT THE HAND-WRITING OF THE DECREEE THAT WAS AGAINST US;

TO THE REDEEMER AND SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY THE FAITHFUL,

WHO WILLETH NOT THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD RETURN TO PENANCE;

TO THE SUN OF JUSTICE, THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FATHER'S GLORY,

WHO ENLIGHTENETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD;

TO THE MAN OF SORROWS,

WHO HATH BORNE OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED OUR GRIEFS;

TO THE SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF SOULS,

WHO CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST:

THIS WORK IS HUMBLY DEDICATED

BY THE LEAST AND MOST UNWORTHY OF HIS MINISTERS,

HENRY RUTTER.

PREFACE.

No subject can be more instructive, important, and interesting to Christians of every denomination, than the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is "the way, the truth, and the life."* He is the sure way, which we must follow; the infallible truth, which we must believe; and the blessed life which we hope to obtain hereafter. What is all the boasted learning of ancient or modern philosophers, if compared with that divine philosophy which Jesus brought from heaven?—a philosophy which does not relate to the perishable things of this life, but to the attainment of eternal felicity in the next. If a treatise on botany, on the method of improving a farm, or preserving health, be found so interesting, how much more important ought we to deem the sacred book of the Gospel, which regards our nearest and dearest interests; which offers to all a reward infinitely superior to earthly riches; which has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its subject. If biography be, at all times, inviting and instructive, how much more when it records the life and actions of a God-man! who descended from heaven to be a propitiation for our sins, to enlighten us by the purest doctrine, and to animate us, by his own example, to the practice of every virtue. "I have given you an example," says he "that as I have done, so you do also."*

Hence his whole life, as St. Austin observes, is a continual instruction for the regulation of our manners, and we sin only in proportion as our conduct is a deviation from what he proposes to our imitation. Since, therefore, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath last of all spoken to us by his Son;"† since by a voice from heaven he has expressly commanded us to "hear him;‡ let us listen to this divine Master with respect and docility; let us learn his saving truths; and looking on him as the author and finisher of our faith, let us imitate his life and manners, that we may be truly enlightened and delivered from all blindness of heart.

The following work is intended to comprise a full and complete history of our Lord's sacred life: this is given in the words of the gospel, the narration being a compound text of the four evangelists, with such observations as tend to elucidate what is obscure, to ascertain the time and place of every transaction, to establish the series of facts, and to reconcile seeming contradictions. The text which is here

* John xiv. 6.

* John xiii. 15. † Heb. i. 1. ‡ Matt. xvii. 5.

employed as the ground-work, is that of Bishop Challoner's edition, though we have frequently had recourse to Dr. Witham's approved version, which occasionally expresses the sense with greater ease and perspicuity. The gospels have ever been esteemed the most excellent part of the sacred writings, because what the law and the prophets only foretold, the gospel, says St. Austin, plainly demonstrates to have been accomplished. It is here Christ teaches us, not by his prophets, but by his own divine mouth, the great lessons of faith and of eternal life; and the history of his life is set before us as the most perfect pattern of sanctity for our imitation, being delivered by the sacred penmen with a certain dignity and simplicity not to be found in profane authors.* The dispassionate, simple, yet dignified manner in which the evangelists speak of their divine Master, and of the most sublime mysteries, without any pomp of diction, is admitted by unbelievers themselves, and is justly to be considered as having in it something more than human. Not a single word therefore of the sacred writers has been omitted which might render the narrative more complete, more intelligible, or circumstancial; though the frequent transitions from one evangelist to another may occasionally detract from that uniformity of style which is expected in historical composition. Besides the evangelists, the compiler has freely availed himself of the labours of other approved writers, and without reserve or citing their names, has adopted their thoughts, their sentiments, and even their expressions. In explaining the sacred text, he has consulted the best interpreters, both ancient and modern; but without servilely attaching himself to any in particular. Truth has been his object, which, without system or prejudice, he endeavours, to the best of his power, freely to pursue. Sensible that the word of God is not of "private interpretation,"* he has been cautious of advancing any thing of his own; choosing rather to tread in the footsteps of other approved authors, than to strike out new and unknown paths. Experience evinces, that to the proud and self-conceited, holy scripture is inaccessible: like the mysterious pillar which conducted the Israelites in the desert, it diffuses its cheering light upon the truly humble of heart, while to the vain and presumptuous it turns its dark side in punishment of their depraved dispositions. To the judgment, therefore, of the Catholic Church, which is "the pillar and ground of truth,"† the compiler professes the most humble submission. As it is from the Catholic Church we received the gospel pure and entire, so from the same source we must receive its true and genuine sense. The same authority which, in the first ages of the Church, discriminated and proscribed so many false gospels,‡ has always maintained and exercised the same right in judging and proscribing the false interpretations that have been given to the true gospel. A book is solely to be estimated

* "Grave et immutabile sanctis
Pondus adest verbis, et vocem facta sequuntur."

See also, in the succeeding argument, the celebrated testimony of Rousseau in favour of gospel history.

* 2 Pet. i. 20. † 1 Tim. iii. 15.

‡ The number of spurious or false gospels, according to Calmet, amounted to about fifty.

by the sense which it contains. To receive from the hands of the Church the book of the gospel, and to ascribe to it a false meaning which the Church reprobates, is a contradiction : it is in reality the same as following a false gospel. If formerly the church had authority to reject false gospels, why has she not still authority to reject the false interpretations imposed on the true gospel by the private spirit of individuals ? The tradition of the Church, therefore, must necessarily be our safest guide, and such it was ever esteemed by the ancient fathers : tradition preceded the gospel; tradition dictated the gospel; and tradition still accompanies and explains the genuine sense of the gospel. Dr. Hare, the learned Protestant Bishop of Chichester, published a treatise on the difficulties which attended the study of the scriptures in the way of private judgment, in which he shows the absurdity of following such a fallacious rule, and declares that "the orthodox faith does not depend upon the scriptures considered absolutely in themselves, but as explained, by catholic tradition handed down from one orthodox bishop to another, whose business it was to keep this sacred deposit pure and undefiled, and to deliver it to his successor entire as he received it." "That the text of holy writ is, on many accounts, insufficient to be the sole criterion of orthodoxy," Lord Bolingbroke allows to have been shown by Catholic writers. See his fifth letter on the study and use of history.

As the Catholic Church is the true and proper interpreter of scripture, (a truth denied only by sectarists,) so those seem best qualified for expounding the sacred text, whom she reckons among her fathers and defenders, or who tread at least in their footsteps, and adhere to their doctrine. The holy fathers were certainly men of distinguished virtue, genius, and learning : they were raised up by God for the protection of his Church; and therefore they are proposed to us as the best and safest guides for interpreting the holy scripture in the same spirit in which it was written. In critical knowledge, indeed, they may be inferior to many of the moderns, nor do they, like them, affect a vain parade of erudition in jejune and trifling questions : but, instead of stopping at the shell, they attend more to the spiritual sense, and as it were to the kernel of the sacred text, and rightly judge that they then attain the true meaning, or rather the true intention of the scriptures, when they apply them to the reformation of manners. Let not the biblical student, therefore, be deterred by a certain false delicacy from consulting their works : if in these venerable authors he find some trifling blemishes, which were rather the faults of the times than of the men, he will find in them likewise abundance of real excellences and solid advantages, such as far outweigh their defects.*

* As to Protestants, they generally neglect the study of the holy fathers, for this obvious reason, that they favor the Catholic cause, and are decidedly in opposition to the leading doctrines of the Reformation. We have here the testimony and confession of some of the most learned and illustrious heads of the Protestant Church. Luther, who began the Reformation, an. 1517, in the conclusion of his book against King Henry VIII. thus expresses his contempt of those old witnesses of the Catholic doctrine : "I don't concern myself what Ambrose, Austin, councils, and practice of ages say ;— I know them so well as to have declared against them." Trac. 2. Ed. Wirtemb. 1562, fol. 847. Calvin is equally free in censuring the fathers. See lib. 2. c. 2. § 4. l. 3. c. 3. § 16. c. 4. § 30. c. 5. § 10. l. 4. c. 12, &c. Melancthon in 1. Cor. iii. writes as follows : "Presently from the beginning of the Church the *ancient fathers* obscured the doctrine concerning

Such points as relate merely to criticism, are discussed in the following work with the utmost brevity, and when compared with others of greater importance, seem hardly to deserve our attention. For instance, to know precisely the year in which Christ was born, how many passovers he celebrated, and other points of a similar nature, are questions rather curious than useful; they interest not Christians in general; and as they have already exercised the learned, so they still continue to elude their most laborious investigations.* But what is of infinitely greater consequence, and not only useful, but necessary for all, is that we be rightly sensible of the dignity of the gospel history, and embrace it with that respect and veneration which are due to the word of God. We must remember that holy things are for holy persons, and require suitable disposi tions in those who would derive from them any spiritual improvement.

To read to advantage, therefore, we must observe the following rules, which are recommended to us by spiritual writers. In the first place, we should never fail to elevate our mind to God, to beg his grace that our reading may become fruitful; that it may penetrate our hearts, and take such root there, as to render us more fervent in virtue, more guarded against the illusions of the world, and more constant in whatever may promote our spiritual advancement and perfection. For this end we may say with the psalmist, "Open thou my eyes, O Lord, and I will consider the wonderful things of thy law,"* or the prayer taken out of the "Daily Companion," which is hereafter set down. St. Austin (Ep. ad Virg. Dem.) exhorts Christians so to read the holy scripture, as always to bear in mind that the words which it contains, are the words of God, who requires that we not only know, but likewise fulfil his divine law. Hence, says he, we must consider the holy scripture as a looking-glass, in which the soul beholds herself, in order to correct what is evil, and to perfect what is good: for knowledge without works, will serve only to accuse and condemn us. Another excellent advice on this subject, is to read leisurely; seeking not so much to learn, as to taste the things of God. For the simple knowledge of the understanding is dry and barren, unless it warm the will and excite that fervour which alone can render our reading profitable.

the justice of faith, increased ceremonies, and devised peculiar worships." Peter Martyr, one of the chief instruments in the Reformation of England, tells us: "That in the Church errors began immediately after the apostles' time, and that therefore, as long as we insist upon *Councils* and *Fathers*, we shall be conversant in the same errors." 1 de Votis, pp. 477, 490. Hence Beza had the arrogance to write, (Ep. Theol. 1,) "I have said more than once——that comparing the ancient times of the Church, even those immediately succeeding the apostles, with ours, they had better consciences, but less knowledge. On the contrary, we have more knowledge, but less consaience. This is my judgment," &c. And Bishop Judith, in his Epistle to Beza, says: "If that be the truth which the ancient fathers have, with one accord, professed, it must be owned that this truth will be wholly on the Papists' side." See Mr. Brereley's Protestant Apology, Trac. 1. sect. 3. We may, therefore, fairly conclude that, in the chief points of controversy debated between Catholics and Protestants, the ancient fathers coincide with the former; and this appeared so manifest to Dr. Middleton, that he frankly owns, he pities the Protestants when he sees them struggling to reconcile the fathers to the Reformation. It is well known that Daillé wrote his book "On the Use of the Fathers," for the purpose of invalidating their testimony and authority in religious matters. We may, therefore, justly conclude in the words of Dr. Warburton in his Julian, p. 1, "that a sovereign contempt for the authority of the fathers, and no great reverence for any other, is what now-a-days makes a Protestant in fashion." But the learned doctor adds, that this neglect is prejudicial to religion, and still more to learning.

* It has been observed that Christ, in explaining the holy scriptures, never touches on the critical and curious questions which employ the learned.

* Ps. cxviii. 18.

Hence we should not read too much at a time, lest instead of fortifying, we should rather fatigue and tire the mind. For as the nourishment of the body depends not upon the quantity, but upon the good digestion of our food, so also the nourishment of the soul consists not in reading much, but in ruminating and digesting well what we have read. Agreeably to this, a holy man advises us to keep in our minds during the whole day, some striking passage which we have been reading, that by often recurring to it, we may digest it the better : and this should also be something which relates to our good purposes and resolutions, in order to strengthen them, and hinder the mind from distracting or dissipating itself with other thoughts. (Ep. ad Fra. de Mont. Dei.)*

Besides these general directions, there are others which more immediately refer to the subject of the following work. The principal of these is, to read the life of Christ with a real design of conforming our lives to his. In this conformity consists all the sanctity of man. For God "has predestined us," says the apostle, "to be conformable to the image of his Son,"† that "as we have borne the image of the old man," in following the irregular desires of our flesh, "we may bear the image of the new man,"‡ who is Jesus Christ, by framing our life after the model of his, and may be able to say with the same apostle, "I live, no not I; but it is Jesus Christ who liveth in me."§ We are not then to read his history out of curiosity, nor barely to know what he has done; but to learn from the things which he did, what we ourselves have to do. It concerns us, therefore, to let nothing pass without examining what profit it may produce, and what affections it ought to raise in us : for the reading of our Saviour's life should sometimes instruct us, at other times confound us, and sometimes again give us comfort and courage; and lastly, inspire us with sentiments of love, gratitude, respect, joy, sorrow, hope, or fear, according to the different objects which it presents to our mind.

The whole life of Christ is composed of miracles, discourses, actions, and sufferings.* He wrought miracles to prove his divinity, and to relieve those who implored his assistance. To read these with advantage, we may put ourselves in the place of those who beheld them, or of those in whose favour they were wrought. Such of the former as profited by these prodigies, believed in him who wrought them, praised and adored him, and became his disciples. Let us do the same, when we read what they beheld; let us adore Jesus Christ, confess him to be our God, make an act of faith concerning his divinity, and dedicate ourselves entirely to his service, since we cannot honour him as God, without paying him, as such, our love and obedience.

In the next place, let us duly attend to the behaviour of those whose wants Jesus Christ relieved by his miracles. All the bodily distempers which he cured, represented the spiritual distempers of our souls. It is sin we must

* This is often quoted as St. Bernard's, but appears to be the work of William, Abbot of St. Thierry.

† Rom. viii. 29. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 49. § Gal. ii. 20.

* Preface to the "Life of Christ," translated from the French by W. C., and printed an. 1739.

consider as our spiritual leprosy, our deafness, our blindness, our palsy, our death. Let us do then for the health of our soul, what was done by them for the health of the body. Let us present ourselves with them before Jesus Christ; let us say to him with the leper, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole;" with the blind man, "Open my eyes and give me sight," &c. Let us consider what it is Jesus Christ requires of us, in order that he may help us in our infirmities, by considering what it was he required of those who implored his assistance. Let us, in short, imitate the gratitude, faith, love, and other affections expressed by those that were miraculously freed from their miseries; considering what was done by them, as a figure of what we ought to feel in ourselves, for the spiritual graces which we have received from the same bountiful hand.

The discourses of Jesus Christ should be read with respect; and this respect consists in believing and practising what he teaches. He is the truth, and nothing but this truth can save us; and according to its maxims we shall one day be judged. It is our duty to hear him as his disciples, and to be persuaded of all he teaches. All our darkness must be laid open to him, that he may dispel it, and all our errors, that he may reform them. This is to be done by applying to ourselves every word that was spoken by Jesus Christ, and by examining ourselves upon what he has said, that so we may condemn ourselves, if we find that we have strayed from the way he taught, and may reform our practice pursuant to his orders.

As his word is the rule of all justice, it is by it we are to judge of our actions; and to approve or blame them, as we find them consonant or contrary to it. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that this rule is inflexible and immutable. It will not bend to our inclinations, and it is in vain for us to pretend to force it, and make it say what we wish. No; it is our business to frame ourselves by it, and to submit to all its decisions. If what it enjoins seems difficult, we must blame the corruption of our hearts, and entreat Jesus Christ to cure it by his grace, that we may cheerfully execute his commands. When any thing in his discourses transcends our comprehension, let us address ourselves to him, and beg that he would be pleased to make us understand it: if the knowledge of it be necessary for our salvation, let us have recourse to our pastors, that they may expound it to us; and while we wait for the explication required, let us, in the interim, feed on the truths that are clear; and by faithfully observing what we comprehend, we may possibly deserve the knowledge of what as yet is beyond our reach.

To draw profit from the actions of Jesus Christ, they ought to be considered as the rule and model of our conduct.* His actions are here distinguished from his miracles; for the latter are considered with relation to the persons in whose favour he wrought them, and the former with relation to ourselves. He will have us to admire his miracles, but he will have us to imitate his actions: we are the persons he represents in his own private conduct; for this reason he directs us to

* "Quia ipse Christus verbum Dei est, etiam *factum* verbi, verbum nobis est."—St. Aug.

learn of him, not to give sight to the blind, nor life to the dead, but to be meek and humble of heart. When he cures a sick man, or feeds five thousand persons with five loaves, it is not then in him that I consider myself, in order to profit by these miracles, but it is in the sick man whom he cures, and in this people whom he feeds; for I am sick myself, and stand in need of the spiritual bread of divine grace; so that in the miracles of our Saviour I see what he does for the curing and feeding of my soul, as I learn from the people, or from the sick, what I am to do in order to obtain the graces which I want. But when he joins with these prodigies, an action which regards himself in particular, it is then that I find myself, as it were, in him, and may learn some practical instruction. For example, he forbids a sick man whom he has cured to publish the miracle done in his favour; and he withdraws when the people whom he had fed would have made him their king. It is in actions of this kind that I behold the pattern of my conduct, and that I must follow his example in shunning, as he did, vain-glory and ambition.

The actions, therefore, of Jesus Christ must be read with the same spirit as his discourses, i. e., with an intention to copy them, since we are no less obliged to follow his example than to obey his word. Whether he speaks or acts, it is to show us the way in which we are to walk; and it is for this same end, that we ought to know what he said and what he did. Now, in the actions of the Son of God, what ought chiefly to be considered is, the spirit with which he acted, and the virtue which he exhibited; for it is properly this spirit and this virtue which we are obliged to imitate. He washes the feet of his disciples: the virtue which most eminently appears in this action, is humility; and it is on purpose to teach us to be humble, that he thus demeans himself. He eats with sinners: the spirit of this conduct is a spirit of charity; and this charity he recommends to us, by his example, more than the outward substance of the action. Finally, we ought to study well the affections of Jesus Christ, that they may be the rule of ours. For as love is the principle of all we do, our actions are good or bad according to the love from which they spring. Our love is virtuous, if we love as Christ loved, and what he loved: our love is depraved, if we love what he did not love. He loved not riches, nor glory, nor pleasures; on the contrary, he despised all these things. He shunned not poverty, calumnies, pains, ignominies, nor death itself. He sought only the glory of his Father; and all his care was to obey and please him. In a word, he loved nothing sovereignly but God, he hated nothing sovereignly but sin: he willingly deprived himself of all the goods of this life, and had no apprehensions of its evils. This is what he designed to teach us by the whole course of his life, and this is what we ought to consider, and imitate throughout the whole of our life.

We shall not insist on the advantages which may be derived from reading the sufferings of Jesus Christ. They must ever be looked upon as perfectly voluntary, and it is advisable to consider them in reference to the two ends for which he endured them. And here,

by his sufferings, we understand not only the ill-treatment which he received from his enemies, but likewise all his abasements and human infirmities, such as infancy, hunger, thirst, weariness, troubles, fears, flights, repugnances, and, in general, all the other miseries which he condescended to take upon himself for our instruction.

He suffered, first, in order to satisfy the divine justice for our crimes; and though he was innocence and holiness itself, he underwent the pains due to our sins, that so he might deliver us from those eternal pains to which, by the just judgment of God, we had been condemned. This view should excite in us sentiments both of gratitude and of sorrow; of gratitude towards Jesus Christ, who suffers for us, and spares nothing to let us know how much he loves us; of sorrow and hatred of sin, which could not be expiated but by the sorrows, humiliations, and death of a God made man.

If the sufferings of Jesus Christ be considered in relation to the second end for which he underwent them, i. e., for our instruction, we may, in reading them, form some of the following reflections. A Christian must persuade himself of the necessity of suffering for attaining heaven, when he considers that it is by this way alone our Saviour leads us thither, and first entered himself. Let him blush at that softness which makes him avoid whatever can mortify the senses, or humble the mind, when he looks on the innocence of a suffering Jesus, and contrasts it with his own guilt. The Physician takes the medicine of which he stands not in need, and the patient rejects it, though it be absolutely necessary for his recovery. If a man be persecuted, he will find comfort in the honour of being treated like his Master. In fine, by remarking exactly the whole conduct of the Son of God in his sufferings, he will learn to sanctify his own.

Jesus Christ suffered on the part of his Father, who, for us, delivered him up to death; he suffered on the part of men, who repaid with ingratitude all the favours which he had done them, who despised and slandered him, ill-treated and nailed him to the cross: he suffered, in fine, by his own free-will, offering himself a sacrifice for the salvation of men. The submission with which he drank the chalice presented by his Father, must teach us to accept, without murmuring, the crosses which God is pleased to send us, such as diseases, the loss of our fortune, of our friends, relations, &c. The meekness with which he suffered injuries from men, should stifle in us all those emotions of anger and desires of revenge, which on receiving affronts are too apt to arise in our hearts. That ardent charity, with which he delivered himself up to all his sufferings, for his Father's glory, and for our salvation, teaches us how to sanctify, by a pure love of God, all the voluntary pains which we enjoin ourselves with the view of taming our flesh and expiating our offences. He has taught us, by his example, to consider the persecutions of men as ordained by God, and to adore his justice in the most unjust treatment which we can receive from them. He has taught us to love our enemies, and not to return evil for evil; to pardon the injury done us, and to do good for evil. He has taught us, in fine, to comfort ourselves amid suffer-

ings, by the prospect of that glory which is to follow them. This ought to be well observed in reading what Jesus Christ has suffered for us. We must not only remark, says St. Austin, what way Jesus Christ chooses, but whither he is going: he leads us through a way which is narrow, rough, and difficult; but he leads us to eternal glory. Let us follow him to the very end of his course: he lives in abjection, he dies in torments; but he rises after his death, and ascends to heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God. Let us never lose sight of him: let us never separate his glory from his sufferings. If he suffers, let us consider the happiness he has in view; and when we see him in glory, let us remember it was by the cross that he arrived at it. What he did, we ought to do likewise: he calls us to partake of his sufferings, and likewise of his felicity; I should rather have said, he entered himself as a partner in our misery, in order to make us partners with him in his glory. In his mortal life we behold the model which we are to follow in our own, and in his life of glory, an image of that which he has prepared for us, provided we live as he lived. For, as St. Cyprian observes, (de Idol. van.,) Christians will one day be what Christ now is, if they now be what he was. "Quod est Christus, hoc erimus Christiani, si Christum fuerimus imitati."

ON HARMONIES IN GENERAL,

AND ON THE METHOD ADOPTED IN THE FOLLOWING WORK.

A DESIRE to know the proper series of our Lord's transactions is so just and natural, that it becomes a matter of surprise that no English harmony has yet been published for the benefit of those Catholics who use that language. This will appear the more extraordinary, if we consider the great advantages arising from works of this nature, the object of which is to arrange the gospel history in the most clear and perspicuous method, by bringing the several facts recorded in the four gospels into chronological order, and by reconciling seeming contradictions. It is obvious that each of the evangelists has a different order and method from the rest: one expresses himself more clearly than another, or with greater force; another relates things more in detail; one is concise, another is diffuse in his narration. For instance, what is omitted by St. Matthew may be found in St. John; and, on the contrary, St. John frequently passes over in silence what St. Matthew gives in detail. This being admitted, who can doubt of the advantages resulting from a judicious harmony, which exhibits the four evangelists in one point of view, and collects their dispersed rays so that they mutually help and elucidate each other.*

If the learned have manifested so much curiosity in ascertaining every minute circumstance relating to the lives of kings, and other personages celebrated in history; if natural affection has a similar influence upon us with regard to those persons whom we love and esteem; is it not reasonable to extend the same spirit of investigation to the series and order of the life of Jesus Christ, who is our King, our Lawgiver, and the only real object worthy of our love, especially since he has been pleased to combine with the history of his sacred life, that holy and divine religion which he came to bestow on mankind?

It is not our intention to enter into a further detail of the many advantages to be derived from an evangelical harmony. In a matter of this kind it is sufficient to observe, that Jesus Christ is the object of our researches, and that they cannot therefore be deemed altogether useless, being the natural consequence of that love and esteem which we entertain for our Redeemer. In effect, if St. Chrysostom reproached the Christians of his time for not knowing the names of the twelve lesser prophets of the Old Testament, and the number of St. Paul's epistles; if he condemns this ignorance of his flock as a sign of their little devotion, may we not with greater reason affirm, that the indifference of such as refuse to learn the order and series of Christ's

* "The evangelists treating of the same subject do give great light to one another, and I think with the greatest advantage may be read in harmony."—LOCKE.

actions and discourses, is far more reprehensible, and implies a greater negligence in religious concerns ?

By some it may perhaps be alleged, in justification of their negligence, that if God had designed Christians to be informed of the order of Christ's actions and discourses, he would certainly have taken care that this order should have been minutely observed by his evangelists. In answer to this, we have only to remark with St. Austin, that divine providence has designedly left some things in obscurity, with the view of exercising our mental powers; and, that as the discovery of these difficulties is to be the reward of our own industry and of our prayers, our pleasure arising from thence will increase in proportion to the pains we have been at in acquiring such knowledge.

This is one reason assigned by St. Austin for the obscurity of the scripture in general, and it is particularly applicable to the account which the evangelists have left us of the life and death of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost would have us to make the gospel the object of our study and of our unwearied labours. He does not absolutely refuse us the knowledge of scripture, but he would have us to testify, by this our application, the great esteem which we entertain for so great a treasure.

With regard to all the difficulties which occur in reconciling the four evangelists, we may apply in general the following remark, which St. Austin makes respecting the apparent contradiction of St. Matthew and St. Luke concerning the genealogy of Christ, namely, that they who are duly impressed with a proper respect for the sacred writings, are by this very difficulty admonished that they contain hidden mysteries, the knowledge of which God is pleased to communicate to those who ask it in a proper manner, while he refuses the same knowledge to others who slight and contemn his sacred oracles. He willingly discovers his secrets to those who seek after them, but witholds them from such as are careless and fastidious; he lets those in who knock at the door, and excludes those who would force their way in a hostile manner. Hence it is, that the truly humble and well-disposed ask and obtain; they find what they are in quest of, and have the door opened which admits them into the sanctuary.*

While, therefore, the proud and self-sufficient, who deserve not to be enlightened are thus blinded by their own fault, they who are of a contrary disposition, and are truly sincere, derive considerable advantage from these seeming discrepancies of the holy gospels; for they serve to exercise their faith, to try their submission, and finally, to establish incontestably the truth of the evangelical history, by proving, that the evangelists did not write in concert.

As the truth of those things which are related in the gospel, is supported, in part, by the testimony of the authors who have committed them to writing, nothing was more important for the confirmation of our faith, than to re-

* Pie cogitantes, (says the saint,) tantæ auctoritatis eminentiam, latere ibi aliquid credidérunt quod petentibus daretur; oblatrantibus negaretur a quærentibus inveniretur; reprehendentibus subtraheretur; pulsantibus aperiretur; oppugnantibus clauderetur; petierunt, quæsierunt, pulsaverunt, acceperunt, invenerunt et intraverunt.

move every possible doubt respecting the sincerity of these witnesses. Now the most natural suspicion that could arise in the mind, was that these four persons had agreed among themselves by collusion to write a fabulous history, and to impose it on the world as a genuine and authentic narrative. But such a supposition is precluded, and much more guarded against by the apparent diversity which is found in the evangelists, than if the most perfect uniformity had prevailed throughout their narrative, in their expressions, their order, and their manner of composition. Truth, like honesty, often neglects appearances; but hypocrisy and imposture are always guarded.

A perfect sameness might have appeared as the effect of a preconcerted design; whereas, such design is completely refuted by the different manner which they have adopted in their narration; for it is obvious that they relate things just as they occurred to the mind, without any order or relation to preceding accounts. To every unprejudiced person it will clearly appear that the evangelists have written with an admirable candour and simplicity, without any wish to deceive, and solely with the view of instructing the world concerning those important truths, of which they themselves were convinced with the utmost degree of certainty. However, as it is highly expedient to attempt an explanation of the difficulties which it has pleased God; for various reasons, should be interspersed in the sacred books, and as those who succeed herein, may justly hope for the recompense promised to such as expound WISDOM—"qui elucidant me vitam æternam habebunt;"* so, in like manner, although it be advantageous to religion, that the gospels were written without any certain order, or regard to chronology, and with apparent contradictions, yet it must be highly beneficial to reduce to their proper order the events and discourses therein related, with the view of forming a perfect idea of the series of the life of Jesus Christ, by mentioning every thing in its proper place. This is precisely the design of all such treatises as bear the name of "evangelical harmonies."

But there exists in those who have written upon this subject, a great diversity of sentiment, which proceeds from the different methods they take in collating the sacred writers. There are some harmonists who contend that the order pursued by each of the evangelists is never to be inverted on any account, and therefore, all they do is to add such things as are mentioned by the other evangelists. Their motive for this, is because they fancy that each of the evangelists follows exactly and invariably the order of time, and this without any deviation whatever:† others again, though they acknowledge the sacred penmen to have neglected the order of time, yet, scruple to adopt any other: thinking it safer merely to point out what is anticipated or mentioned by way of recapitulation, than to transpose any part of the inspired writings. But it is easy to show how ill-founded are the scruples of the latter, and how erroneous the conjectures of the former.

The opinion that each of the evangelists follows, in his narrative, the

* They that explain me (wisdom) shall have life everlasting.

† Osiander is the head and leader of such harmonists.

exact order of time, appears destitute of all probability. We except St. John, who wrote after the rest, and who alone seems to have observed this order: hence, he is the only one who distinguishes the time of Christ's ministry by the passovers and other festivals. But the others seem little solicitous in what order they narrate the transactions of their divine Master, and therefore content themselves with marking down what they knew to be true and authentic. Hence, they often depart from the natural order of time, either supplying what was before omitted, or anticipating what afterwards came to pass. See St. Austin, lib. 2. de Consen. Evang. c. 21.* This is so certain, that without the wildest suppositions, it cannot be called in question.

Of the three evangelists who have made mention of the imprisonment of St. John Baptist, not one of them does it in its proper place. St. Luke, c. 3., v. 19, takes occasion, from the reprehension of Herod, to anticipate this event, whereas Matthew and Mark place it too far back when they speak of the decolation of St. John. See c. 22, of the following harmony.

Again, Matthew and Mark do not observe the same order in describing the temptations of our Lord; so that it unavoidably follows, either that one of them does not keep the right order, or that Christ was tempted four different times, and twice in the very same manner, which appears highly improbable. See c. 15, of the harmony.

Those who consider the gospels as methodical annals, and who therefore contend that every thing is in its proper place, are reduced to the necessity of multiplying and dividing into different actions and miracles, the events which the learned generally believe to have been the same; such as the history of the woman with a bloody flux, of the centurion, of the devils sent into the swine, to pass over many others of a similar nature. See c. 32, 35, and 45, of the harmony.

As to those who pay such deference to the sacred text, that they scruple to transpose the order of the evangelists, they hereby deprive a harmony of one of its chief advantages. It must be owned that each of the evangelists follows an order peculiar to himself, and not without the particular direction of the Holy Ghost,* by whom they were inspired; and to possess this order entire, we have only to read each of them separately: but when the question is to harmonize the four evangelists into one, then it is obvious that we ought to attend to the real and general order of the time and of the transactions that are there related, and not to the particular order of each evangelist separately considered.

For the same reason, when the same thing is mentioned by different evangelists, it is better to combine the words of each into one complete and uninterrupted narrative, than to arrange the text of each evangelist in distinct columns, as Alan Cope, Le Clerc, Newcome, Molinæus, and others have done.

Wherefore, the best method, in our opinion, of framing an evangelical har-

*No historian, indeed, can be expected to relate every thing in the exact order of time, unless he is writing a journal, which is the most tedious and disagreeable kind of history.

*Arcano Spiritus S. Consilio S. Aug. de Cons. Evan., 2. 21.

mony, and which has been followed in the work before us, is—

1. To assign to its proper place whatever is to be found in the four evangelists, and to make such transpositions as are necessary for this purpose.

2. When the same account is given by different evangelists, to form from all one continued narrative, so full and complete as to supersede the necessity of consulting each of them individually.

3. In doing this, care is taken to point out at the commencement of each chapter, the scripture authorities from which the narrative has been compounded.

The best harmony on this plan, and, in our opinion, the least liable to objections, is that of Arnauld, which was printed an. 1654. It was, indeed originally drawn up by the learned Jansenius, Bishop of Ghent, and was first published an. 1549. It afterwards received improvements from John of Buisson, and was finally completed by the above-mentioned doctor, in such manner, that he seems to have left little to be added by those who come after him. See the exceptions that have been made against this harmony, refuted by Mauduit in the preface to his excellent Analysis of the Gospel, a work of which we have made very considerable use in the present undertaking. At the same time it must be acknowledged, that the harmony in question, is, in some instances, susceptible of improvement, both in regard to the distribution of matter and the arrangement of words; and accordingly we have made some few alterations, which, it is hoped, will meet with the approbation of the learned.*

* We shall here present the reader with a short *general* view of the different systems that have been followed in harmonizing the four gospels. 1. The order of St. Matthew is, in general, observed by Tatian, Ammonius, (if the works attributed to them be genuine,) Juvencus, St. Austin, Comestor, Guido de Perpiniano, Ludolphus, Gerson, among the ancients; also by Jansenius, Bishop of Ghent, the editors of the Rhemish Bible, Beaux-Ami, Mercator, Arnauld, Lamy, Tillemont, Bengel, Bertling, Michaelis and his translator Mr. Marsh, among the moderns. 2. Osiander, or, as he was called in German, Hosmann, follows the present order of the four evangelists, taking it for granted that all the facts recorded in the four gospels are arranged in chronological order. Hence he supposes that the same transactions and discourses took place twice or thrice in the life of Christ, *e. g.* that two sermons were preached on the mount, one related by St. Matthew, the other by St. Luke. &c. This plan is adopted by Molinæus, Sandhagen, Jo. Rus, Hauber, Busching. The harmonies of this kind are very similar to each other. 3. Cartwright and others adopt the present order of St. Mark, transposing St. Matthew and St. Luke. 4. In Usher's Annals we find a harmony by Dr. Richardson, which has been chiefly followed by later writers on the subject. According to this, St. Matthew *only* has neglected the order of time, which is regularly and constantly observed by the other three. Le Clerc, Whiston, Bedford, Lightfoot, Toinard, Dupin, Butini, Calmet, &c., are of this opinion; and though they differ from Richardson and among themselves in many particulars, yet they adhere to the *general* method which he pointed out. Whiston and Toinard, assign as a reason, why St. Matthew appears to be at variance with the other evangelists, that the chapters in his gospel, from the 4th to the 10th, have been strangely confounded, and intermixed by the copyists. But this is mere conjecture, and contradicts the evidence of all the Greek and Latin manuscripts. I shall only add with Mr. Marsh, that as St. Matthew was in general eye-witness to the facts which he has recorded in common with St. Mark and St. Luke, but St. Mark and St. Luke were not, it is surely more reasonable to expect chronological order in the former than in the latter. It is true, that wherever St. Matthew differs in his arrangement from St. Mark or St. Luke, these two evangelists agree in their arrangement with each other. But this agreement affords no proof that they have written in chronological order: for though nothing but an adherance to the real succession of events could produce a uniformity of arrangement in the works of two historians who had no connection, either mediate or immediate, with each other, yet, if either one copied from the other, or both of them drew from a common source, their arrangement might be the same, and yet not chronological. Now that one of these two suppositions must be adopted with respect to St. Mark and St. Luke, appears from the late critical investigations on this subject. The conclusion is, that St. Matthew's order ought to be preferred by harmonists, as in general more chronological than that of the other two evangelists.



INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF CHRIST,

SHOWING THE CONNECTION THAT SUBSISTS BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

DAILY experience evinces, that the greater part of Christians have a very imperfect idea of the obligations which they owe to Jesus their Redeemer. The truth is, that they are not rightly sensible of the miseries from which he came to deliver them. Previous therefore to the history of man's redemption, we shall give that of his fall, by stating the dreadful evils into which he was plunged by the sin of our first parents. This account will exhibit a summary of the whole economy of that divine revelation, which God was pleased to make in favour of mankind: after discovering to us our miseries, it will show us what Jesus has done for our deliverance; and by being made sensible how much we were indebted to the divine justice for our sins, we shall more easily conceive what we owe to his mercy for our salvation.*

After the creation of the world,† God formed man to be his representative in it, and adorned him with all those gifts of mind and body which might qualify him for that exalted station. His soul, furnished with the most ample knowledge of things, was not assailed by any irregular motions, nor did the inferior apetite rashly go before reason, or sluggishly refuse to follow its commands. The tree of life supplied him with food of such excellent quality, as to be capable of rendering him immortal; nor would he, in case he had remained innocent, ever have experienced any pain or dissolution. The beasts all beheld in him the image of the divinity, and the earth spontaneously afforded him an easy and pleasant maintenance, adequate to all his wants and pleasures. Moreover, he was adorned with sanctifying grace, and the Holy Ghost abode in his soul, as the supernatural principle of its interior and spiritual life.

Such was the happy state of our first parents at the beginning of the world: but, for a proof of their obedience and virtue, God laid on them certain easy and salutary commands, by complying with which they might merit new degrees of perfection, and finally arrive at a permanent state of supernatural perfection and everlasting happiness. But unfortunately they obeyed not their Creator, and, forgetful of his divine favours and benefits, paid more regard to the suggestions of the malignant spirit, addressing them in the form of a serpent, than to the admonitions and threats of their sovereign Lord. They ate of the fatal fruit, which he had forbidden them to taste, and which he assured them would prove deadly poison both to themselves and to their posterity. What was the consequence? As, in the designs of a most pure and holy God, felicity and iniquity cannot be united, the flesh, as

* St. Austin judged an abridgement of this kind extremely useful. See Ep. 137. 1. de Cat. Rud. &c.

† See Dr. Hook's Principia Religionis, Nat. et Rev., t. 2.

if contaminated with mortal poison, became inmediately inflamed and disordered; it excited at the same time similar perturbations in the soul; the mind was clouded with ignorance; sensual apetites blindly impelled the soul, without waiting for the command of reason, and this queen and guide of life was almost displaced from her seat by the violence of unruly desires. With original justice and this happy state of nature, man lost that corporeal majesty and dignity which he at first possessed, nor did the brute creation any longer show respect to his person, or pay attention to his voice. Banished from the garden of paradise, a garden planted by God's own hand, and teeming with every production pleasing to the eye and grateful to the taste, he was left to cultivate the barren earth, and to undergo all those labours and sorrows to which we are at present liable; and which, by the subsequent malice of man, have been aggravated, and rendered still more afflicting.*

Man having thus fallen, and become obnoxious to the divine wrath, was unable to satisfy the injured majesty of God; nor could he by any possible repentance recover his ancient state of happiness. By his disobedience he brought ruin on himself and on all his descendants. Being the common father of all, he involved in his misery the whole human race. We are all, therefore, heirs to his fall and punishment, as we should otherwise have been to his innocence and felicity. But this was not all; for in addition to this woful state here, greater evils awaited mankind hereafter, and their immortal souls being released from the body, were destined to the eternal torments of hell. Such was the order first established by God in relation to Adam; such were the fatal consequences of his transgression, extending not only to himself, but to all his posterity.

In this lamentable state of misery, man again experienced the effects of the divine bounty. The Almighty did not suffer Adam to perish in his guilt, but provided for his salvation and that of his descendants in a wonderful manner. Without derogating from his own sanctity and supreme majesty, he effected this by an astonishing mystery of love, in which mercy and truth met each other, and in which justice and peace kissed. In consideration of the merits of a future Redeemer, man was again received into favour, and his sentence of eternal death was exchanged for that of a temporary exile only. By the mediation of this Deliverer, a new covenant was entered into, which was truly a covenant of mercy on the part of God, and grounded on the following conditions.

The only-begotten Son of God, agreeably to his Father's will, as likewise to his own excessive charity for us, was pleased to become our Patron and Mediator, and to form, by assuming our nature, an alliance with the

* Such was the just punishment of the disobedience of our first parents. Whoever, says St. Austin, looks upon this condemnation to be unjust or excessive, knows not how to weigh the malice of a sin which might so easily have been avoided; and he considers not, sufficiently, how much a creature deserves, who slights the orders of Him who created him to his own image, and enriched him with his gifts; who did not load him with a multitude of hard, burdensome commands, but imposed on him one so very easy and suitable, whereby he might know who was his Lord, and might by his obedience, deserve everlasting glory; who, in fine, threatened him with eternal punishment if he dared to disobey. Who can express how great a crime it was to go against a positive precept, so easy in itself, and to slight such terrible menaces?



The Fall of Man.

whole human race. For this purpose he chose to be born of a pure virgin, and being clothed with our flesh, was thus enabled to offer to God in our behalf, that full and complete satisfaction, of which sinful man was himself incapable, being by nature a child of wrath. Jesus, therefore, being made a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, blotted out the hand-writing that stood against us, despoiled principalities and powers, and liberated mankind from the jaws of eternal death. "For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead; and as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."* Having thus purchased mankind, not by corruptible gold and silver, but by his own precious blood, he received from his Father the full plenitude of power. In recompense of his bitter passion, he was exalted above all, and had a name given him above every other name, together with supreme authority and jurisdiction over mankind whom he had redeemed at so dear a rate. In quality of our Redeemer, he became the Author and Mediator of the new covenant. This covenant was agreed to by the Almighty at the beginning of the world, and is justly styled the covenant of grace, because the design of it is to reconcile and unite God with man, and man with God. On the part of man, Jesus agreed with his Father to bestow on us those helps of grace by which we might worthily serve him, and by faith and charity deserve to be adopted as his children, and so be made co-heirs with him in his heavenly kingdom. And as in consequence of our fall, we are now liable to greater temptations, and in the practice of virtue experience greater difficulties, hence God was pleased to mitigate the rigour of that first law, which rendered sin on the part of man irreparable, and man obnoxious to everlasting death. Our Mediator therefore, stipulated in favour of sinners, a supply of those graces by which man might repent, and through him make satisfaction for his transgressions: in fine, as a reward and encouragement of good actions, he ensured to us the greatest recompenses to be bestowed on us hereafter in heaven. On the other side, as Christ was the mediator of God with man, and as such was to consult the dignity of his injured Father, he strictly enjoined, by the evangelical law, the worship of the one true God, the most exact observance of natural religion, and that men believing in him as their Saviour, and relying on his merits, should have frequent resource to God by fervent and humble supplications. He moreover added various precepts, suited to the exigencies of different times. Behold here a short view of that divine economy which God observed in regard of religion. We shall enter now into a further detail of its successive evolutions.

Soon after the unhappy fall of our first parents, God was pleased to make known to them the gracious designs which he had conceived in their favor. He informed them, that from the seed of the woman would one day arise a Deliverer, who should crush the serpent's head, should merit the pardon of our transgressions, and finally make us joint heirs with him in his kingdom;

* 1 Cor. xv. 21

but with this proviso, that, on our part we should adhere to him by faith, and lead a holy and godly life according to his injunctions. Moreover, God promised, that in consideration of the merits of this blessed seed, he would never be wanting to mankind; and in order that the remembrance of this Deliverer might be ever fresh in their minds, he chose to be worshipped by the slaying of sheep and other beasts; hereby clearly signifying that it was to the bloody sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb, that men otherwise devoted to death, would one day be indebted for their deliverance. Thus, faith in a Redeemer, and sacrifices expressive of this faith, comprised the whole of religion, as superadded to that natural law which from the beginning was impressed on the heart of man; and from these two sources, though variously corrupted, flowed all those different religions which obtained in the pagan world.

Happy would it have been for mankind had they showed a due sense of gratitude for this kindness of their Creator, and made a proper use of those divine helps which he offered them for that purpose. But their conduct was the reverse: in a short time, all flesh had corrupted its way, and so great was the wickedness of the world, that the Almighty was provoked to execute on it the most exemplary vengeance by a general deluge.

Noah, being a just man, was saved with his family from the common ruin in which the rest of mankind was involved. God comforted him by his promises, and by word of mouth, delivered to him and to his children the precepts of the law of nature, which he sanctioned at the same time by his express authority. The remembrance of these precepts was ever preserved among the Hebrews. But after the deluge, the mass of mankind fell again into a forgetfulness of the divine judgments and precepts, and the memory of them in the space of 400 years seemed almost obliterated from their minds. Men began to seek God, not with their mind, but with their eyes, some worshipping the sun and stars, others their deceased parents or kings, and others, even dumb and lifeless idols.

In this state of degeneracy, God manifested again his goodness in the support of religion. He chose for himself a peculiar nation, and became, as it were, its tutelary and domestic God, ruling and governing it with particular care. Abraham was adopted as the father of this chosen generation: God ordered him to quit his family and country; and such was his providential care over him, that in the midst of foreigners, jealous of his prosperity, he continued to increase in wealth, power, and authority. God entered into a compact with him, which was sanctioned by an oath and the solemn rite of circumcision. It is thus described in the annals of religion: * "After he (Abraham) began to be 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him: and said unto him: I am the Almighty God: walk before me and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply the exceedingly, and thou shalt be the father of many nations, and I will make thee increase exceedingly, and I will

* Gen. xvii.



make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and between thy seed after thee in their generations, by a perpetual covenant; to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give to thee and to thy seed the land of thy sojournment, all the land of Canaan for a perpetual possession, and I will be their God. Again, God said to Abraham: And thou, therefore, shalt keep my covenant, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which you shall observe between me and you, and thy seed after thee: all the male kind of you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of the fore-skin, that it may be for a sign of the covenant between me and you. An infant of eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations: he that is born in the house, as well as the bought servant, shall be circumcised, and whosoever is not of your stock. And my covenant shall be in your flesh for a perpetual covenant. The male whose flesh of his fore-skin shall not be circumcised, that soul shall be destroyed out of his people, because he hath broken my covenant." The Almighty afterwards, on account of the faith and obedience of Abraham, renewed the same promises with an oath, in the following words: "By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the seashore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies, and in thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed."* This covenant was confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, nor did God disdain even to be called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This compact with Abraham, contained two parts; the one temporal, which belonged to his carnal progeny and the land of Canaan; the other spiritual, which regarded the blessed seed and the whole human race.

As after the death of Jacob this chosen people, under the divine protection, were to increase prodigiously, and could not exist without civil laws, it pleased the Almighty in his wisdom to transport Jacob and his family into the flourishing kingdom of Egypt, where, without provoking the envy of the neighbouring nations, this favorite race might securely multiply for the space of about 200 years, and might, at the same time, enjoy the benefit of a regular government, without any civil constitution of their own. But lest the descendants of Abraham should adopt the usages and customs of the idolatrous Egyptians, and lose the remembrance of the divine promises, the patriarch Jacob, a little before his death, minutely explained the nature of these promises to his children, and foretold what would afterwards befall each of them in their generation. He not only informed them that their posterity should increase to a great and independent people, but assured them, "that the scepter should not be taken away from Judah, nor a ruler from his thigh, till the Messias came, the expectation of all nations." Moreover, in token of their future emigra-

* Gen. xxii. 16.

tion from Egypt, and to impress it more deeply on their minds, Jacob, by his last will, enjoined his children to carry his body to the sepulchre of their fathers. It was with the same design that Joseph also ordered his remains to be carefully preserved in Egypt, in order afterwards to be transported from thence by his descendants, to whom they were to serve as a striking monument of this expected event.

After a lapse of about 215 years, when the increasing multitude of the Israelites had excited the envy of the Egyptians, and they were now themselves in a condition to occupy the land of Canaan, God delivered his people from servitude with out-stretched arm, under the guidance of Moses. In this deliverance, all nature was made obedient to the voice of man. It was then the Almighty not only became the tutelary, and as it were the domestic God of his people, but he was pleased likewise to take upon himself the government of their republic. Being solemnly elected as their king by the universal suffrage of the people, he formed with them a compact; the conditions of which Moses has expressed in these words.* "Thou hast chosen the Lord this day to be thy God (and Governor,) and to walk in his ways, and keep his ceremonies, and precepts, and judgments, and to obey his command: and the Lord hath chosen thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath spoken to thee, and to keep all his commandments, and to make thee higher than all nations, which he hath created to his own praise, and name, and glory." After having thus taken upon himself the civil authority, God immediately proceeded to the exercise of his regal power: he enacted laws never to be abrogated by man, he constituted judges and magistrates as his ordinary vice-gerents, and reserved to himself the determination of more weighty and difficult questions. He was pleased, moreover, to display in the Jewish republic all the marks of regal power; a most splendid tabernacle was erected, at the entrance of which, as at the gates of a royal palace, a constant guard attended; a certain number of ministers was maintained at the public expense, and deputed to the service of the king; and a tax was levied in testimony of his supreme authority. In short, God performed in the midst of his people all the duties of sovereignty; he led their armies into the field; he administered justice; he distributed rewards and punishments, and manifested so peculiar a providence in their regard, that the safety and prosperity of the state were attached to the people's obedience and fidelity; while on the other hand, calamity and ruin were the unavoidable consequences of their rebellious conduct. It was thus that God preserved the true religion amidst a stiff-necked people, that was ever prone to follow the general corruption of surrounding nations.

But it must be particularly observed, that as Jesus Christ was the great object announced from the beginning of the world, so, all the most remarkable persons, events, and ordinances, were prefigurative of his person and mediation, and had relation to him as the expected Deliverer of mankind. Hence in the very foundation of the Jewish republic, in the constitution of its laws,

* Deut. xxvi. 17.



The burnt offerings.

and in every important event which befell that people, all was prophetic of future times, and a kind of adumbration of that more perfect law which Jesus was afterwards to establish in his church.

Moreover, that nothing might be wanting to keep the Jews in the constant expectation of this their future Deliverer, God signified to them that he would raise up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren, like Moses, i. e., a prophet like him, like him the deliverer of his brethren, like him the promulgator of a new law, like him the mediator of a new covenant which all were to obey. In proportion as the time approached, for the coming of this great prophet, in whose presence Moses himself was to be silent, the predictions concerning him became more clear and circumstantial. God seemed wholly occupied with the prosecution of this grand object. He deputed prophets from time to time, to announce his arrival; each of them pointed him out by some particular feature, proper to make him known at his appearance. They were so many messengers, sent beforehand to keep alive the cherished hope, and they minutely foretold the various circumstances attending Christ's birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection. Thus the history of the Messiah was already written, and divulged, before he showed himself in person.

At last the time arrived, when God, who at sundry times and in divers manners had spoken to us by his prophets, was now pleased to speak to us by his Son. Accordingly, the Ruler of the temple, the Angel of the testament, was born of a virgin-mother, of the race of David, in the city of Bethlehem; angels announced his birth to the shepherds; the wise men of the east were conducted to him by an extraordinary star; and to the people at large he was pointed out by the voice of John the Baptist, as likewise by a voice from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him!" After this authentic testimony in his favour, Jesus entered on the functions of his sacred ministry. This, as foretold by the prophets, was threefold, prophetical, regal, and sacerdotal. The prophetical character he sustained during the whole time he conversed with men. In quality of the great prophet, that had been foretold, he made known to mankind the divine will; by the most evident miracles he proved his doctrine to be from God; he confirmed it by the most heroic acts of virtue; he sealed it with his blood; and having abrogated the old law, of which he was the end, he substituted in its stead the new law, which is to endure for ever.

The sacerdotal office consisted in offering up gifts and sacrifices for sin, and in making intercession with God. Christ being a priest, offered to the Lord the most perfect holocaust, viz. the immaculate victim of his own body, in which he bore our sins; and being fastened to the cross, he there poured forth prayers and supplications for us, being heard by his Father on account of his reverence; and as he is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec, so he still continues the same sacrifice of his body and blood upon our altars, under the appearances of bread and wine, and ceases not in heaven to make intercession for us.

Thus, he abolished the temporary priesthood of Aaron, and substituted in its stead that of Melchisedec, to remain for ever. Finally, after the ignominy of his passion, being crowned with honour and glory, and invested with sovereign power, he sanctioned the new law by his royal authority, he established his church, appointed ministers to govern it, sent down upon them the Holy Ghost and his gifts, and, lastly, he will one day come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

ON THE EXCELLENCE AND REASONABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

After giving a summary account of what God has done in favour of mankind, from the beginning of the world till the gospel dispensation, it may not be improper to add here a few of the many strong arguments which justify the Christian's assent and attachment to this holy religion which Jesus came to establish upon earth, and which forms the most considerable part in the following history of his sacred life.

1st, The antiquity, the perpetuity and uniformity of this religion, bespeak its divine origin; 2dly, the truths which it proposes to us are, in themselves, most just, equitable, and beneficial to society;* and, 3dly, the motives of our assent are such as ought to carry conviction to every unprejudiced mind.

1. The antiquity of our religion is the first argument that presents itself, and naturally prepossesses us in its favour. I do not deny that error likewise may have some pretensions to antiquity; for, it must be allowed, there are many inveterate errors which seem to dispute with religion this character of truth. But whoever carefully examines into these errors, will discover that the antiquity which they boast of belongs not to them, but to truth which preceded them. That in religious matters truth and antiquity must go together, appears from the very nature of religion. This being the first and most essential duty of man to his Creator, must therefore have begun with man, and have been coœval with the world. Antiquity, therefore, being a mark of truth, let us see how and whether it belong to the Christian institution. With this view, let us go back to the most ancient writings that have been left us, I mean to the books of Moses, and there we shall find the history of religion and mankind carried up to its very source, and delivered with such evident marks of truth, as are sufficient to convince any reasonable man. This celebrated historian, it must be observed, is every way deserving of credit: he speaks not as in a corner of the earth, and as if afraid of being detected, but in the face of a whole people, not so much for their instruction as for the instruction of future ages. There is not the least ground for suspecting his integrity, since, had his narration been fabulous, there was not a Jew who could not have discovered the imposture. With the Mosaic account

* See Massillon, "Sur la Vérité de la Religion;" and Dr. Hook, vol. ii.

compare the histories of the different sects and superstitions which prevailed in the world after man had begun to form and create divinities for himself. How dark, how obscure, how void even of the very semblance of truth do they appear! They are only the fictions of the poets, whose wild imaginations passed current with a rude people for divine truths. As well may the ravings of bacchanalians be considered as a standard of religion and morality as the works of the heathen poets. But in the writings of Moses, what simplicity, what candour, what evident marks of truth, do we discover! He presents us with a series of facts which appears reasonable, natural, and perfectly consistent with itself. We here find the history of religion beginning with that of the world, before the foundation of empires, the building of cities, and the invention of arts: we behold man adoring the same God whom we adore, erecting altars and offering sacrifice to him, expecting from him the reward of his virtue, or dreading the chastisement of his iniquity. This primitive religion we see handed down pure and inviolate from father to son by the patriarchs, till the prevalence of vice in the world induced the Almighty to choose for himself a peculiar people to be the depositary and guardian of his worship. This was the Jews, to whom he gave the law by Moses, which law was to subsist until the Redeemer of the world, the Expectation of nations should appear, to rescue mankind from the slavery of Satan, and to enlighten them with the beams of a more perfect revelation. Wherefore this first character of truth, viz. its antiquity, most justly entitles religion to our greatest love and respect.

2. Another proof of the Christian religion is derived from its perpetuity. Cast an eye on that infinite variety of sects and superstitions which have, at different times succeeded each other; follow the history of every age and of every nation, and you will find that the different superstitions of each place prevailed but for a time, and ended with the power of their followers. Where are now the gods of Emath, Arphad, and Sepharvaim? In recalling to your mind the history of the ancient conquerors, you must observe that they vanquished the gods of the people by vanquishing the people themselves, and that, by destroying their dominion, they at the same time destroyed their religious worship. What a pleasure it is to behold the true religion alone supporting itself from the beginning, surviving the fate of those who professed it, and braving the united efforts of its adversaries combined together for its destruction! The preservation of this religion, which could never be effaced from the earth, is not to be ascribed to any human power: for all the power of man was armed for its destruction, and the faithful people of God were, for the most part, in a state of extreme weakness and persecution. "It was not by the sword," says the prophet, "that our fathers possessed the land."* Sometimes tributary, sometimes fugitive or groaning in captivity, the chosen people saw themselves frequently oppressed by the greatest monarchies of the world. Assyria, Chaldaia, Babylon, the

* Ps. xliii. 1.

three most formidable powers upon earth, successively meditated their ruin, as well as the extinction of their religion: but in vain. This weak people, whom we behold labouring under oppression in Egypt, wandering in the desert, transported captives into distant provinces, could never be destroyed; and while so many other powerful nations have undergone the fate of all human things, this small but favorite nation was still preserved, together with the true worship of God, notwithstanding all the efforts that were made to abolish it. But whence could this proceed? How could this feeble people stand unshaken and unsubdued in the midst of their inveterate enemies? How could their religion remain unimpaired, in spite of its persecutors, and survive the confusion of so many revolutions, and the fall of so many states and kingdoms? To whom can we ascribe this wonderful work? Surely to no other power but to that of God thus exerting himself in favour of his beloved people, and in support of that divine religion, which he himself had established. And since every invention of man is mortal like himself, and disappears from the earth, may we not hence conclude that religion is the work of God, since, like him, it endures for ever?

3. To the antiquity and perpetuity of religion we must add its uniformity. Every thing around us is subject to change, because every thing around us partakes of the mutability of its origin. The work of man, like himself, is weak and changeable. Immutability belongs only to God. Human laws change according to times and circumstances, but not the laws of God: may we not therefore conclude, that since religion is immutable, it cannot be of human invention, but of a divine and heavenly origin? This immutability is the exclusive privilege of the Christian religion. It does not vary with the times; for it is always the same: it does not accommodate itself to men's humours and passions, in order to preserve its credit; for it is hard to flesh and blood; it teaches us to deny ourselves, to love even our enemies, and to do good to them that hate us. Its tenets are the same in every age: our faith was that of our forefathers, and it will be that of posterity to the end of the world. Faith may indeed become more explicit by the decisions of the Church; and we now see more clearly what are articles of faith, than Christians did before the rise of those heresies which gave occasion to her explanations. But whatever was once defined as an article of faith, was always looked upon as of faith by succeeding generations, and the contrary heresy condemned, in spite of all human efforts to support it. This constant uniformity of the Christian religion is a striking proof of its divinity, and easily distinguishes it from all the sects and superstitions that have been invented by man.

4. Revelation is entitled to our esteem on account of the purity and sublimity of its doctrine. The more we consider the principles of this religion, the more just and equitable will they appear, and the more consonant to the idea which we entertain of the Supreme being. What more noble sentiments can we form of the Deity than those which religion inculcates? A god made of a stock or a stone, a god indifferent to the good or evil of

mankind, and confined within himself, a god full of imperfections and follies, is not the object of Christian but of pagan worship. Where will you find more sublime ideas of the power, of the immensity, of the wisdom, of the goodness, and of the justice of God, than what the scriptures afford? If there be a supreme, eternal Being above us, in whom all things live, he must necessarily be what the Christian religion represents him. We alone do not compare him to the resemblance of man: we alone adore him as a spirit, without those material veils, which serve rather to disguise than manifest him to us. We alone adore him seated above the cherubim, filling every thing by his presence, ruling every thing by his wisdom, creating light and darkness, the author of good, and the punisher of evil. We alone worship him in the manner he will be worshipped, i. e. we do not make his worship consist in a multitude of victims, nor in any exterior forms, but in adoration, in love, in praise, in thanksgiving. Whatever good we possess, we refer to him as to its principle, and we attribute vice to ourselves, as originating only in the corruption of the heart. In God we expect to find the recompense of our fidelity, which is the gift of his grace, or the chastisement of our transgressions, which are always the consequence of the abuse of our liberty. Can any ideas be conceived more worthy of the supreme Being?

The ancient philosophers either debased man to the brute creation, or exalted him to a level with the gods; they either placed his happiness in the base gratifications of sense, or in an imaginary apathy and indifference incompatible with human nature. They knew not the end of his destination; many supposed the soul to die with the body, or to pass successively into other bodies by a perpetual transmigration. The Christian religion alone teaches man the Author of his existence and the noble end for which he was created; it teaches him that sin was the cause of all those evils with which human life is checkered, and of those contradictions which he experiences in himself; hence it evinces the necessity of a redeemer, who might reconcile us to our offended God, and thus restore us to the hope of that immortal bliss for which we were created, and from which we were fallen. Thus, by showing man the happy end of his destination, and the means of its attainment, religion raises him above the grovelling ideas of sense, and, at the same time, corrects and humbles his pride, by letting him see his own infirmity.

Religion inspires us with sentiments not less just and noble in regard to our neighbour. Passion renders man deaf to the wants and distresses of his fellow-creatures; religion makes him consider them as his own. Self-love, shut up within itself, seeks only its own interest; religion commands brotherly love and universal philanthropy, without exception of persons: it teaches us to pay due submission to the authority which God has placed over us, to injure no man, to do our duty, not through fear or shame, but from a principle of conscience, to respect our masters, to bear with our equals, to be affable to inferiors, and to extend our affection even to our greatest enemies. In short, the religion of Jesus can alone make true friends, faithful subjects, great kings,

patient servants, honest ministers, and undaunted soldiers. It renders the faith of contracts inviolable, ensures the peace of families, and maintains the tranquillity of states: it abhors oppression and tyranny, enmities and quarrels, and all manner of injustice, though only conceived in thought. "Give me," said heretofore St. Austin, "a kingdom composed of subjects like these;* what peace, what happiness would they enjoy! What an image of heaven should we behold here upon earth!" Did philosophy, with all its boasted wisdom, ever come near any thing like this? And is it not true, that if God has spoken to men to show them the way of happiness, it must have been in this kind of language? Yes, the more we examine into the Christian religion, the more will it appear worthy of its divine Author; the better we shall discover its hidden beauties and excellencies. It does not fear such an examination, but provokes it: it belongs only to idolatry to hide in darkness its abominable mysteries, the more effectually to conceal the shame and horror of them from the light of day.

As to that part of the Christian doctrine which contains mysteries above the human comprehension, whoever will attentively consider the nature of them, will find that they could not have been invented by man, but must have been revealed by God himself. For example, Christ's miraculous conception, in the womb of a pure virgin, is so extraordinary an event, that if it did not happen as recorded by the evangelists, it is impossible to conceive how they came to devise a circumstance so much out of the common course of nature. The same may be said of many other wonderful circumstances relating to the life of our blessed Redeemer, which could never have occurred to the mind of man, unless they had really been effected by an extraordinary interposition of divine providence.

But as the mysterious points of religion appear so highly objectionable to our modern Deists and Free-thinkers, and are constantly urged by them as an invincible argument against the belief of revelation, let us see whether such objections are founded in reason, and ought really to prove an obstacle to the progress of Christianity. As to the maxims of morality taught by Jesus Christ, they are so agreeable to reason, say our adversaries, that, had he confined himself to them, mankind had long since professed themselves his disciples: a religion without mysteries, they add, is what ought to be announced to men, if we would ensure their rational submission. But are these pretenders to philosophy aware, that in requiring a religion without mysteries, they require a thing totally impossible? This they will find to be the case, if they give themselves time to reflect impartially on the subject. For, let them form to themselves a religion which is agreeable to their own fancy and judgment; it must, necessarily, comprise something incomprehensible to reason, since whatever system of religion they may adopt, they will certainly not exclude from it a Divine Being existing from eternity. Now what is there, I would ask, more inac-

* Lord Bolingbroke acknowledges "that no religion ever appeared in the world, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind." Vol. 4. p. 281.—Again, "The Gospel is in all cases one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity." P. 188.

cessible to reason, and consequently a greater mystery, than eternity? Judge, then, with how little reason they object to the mysteries of our religion, since they themselves, with their natural religion, are compelled to bend to the same yoke. I go further, and maintain that to admit things which surpass our understanding, is so much in the nature of our present condition, that Atheists themselves are not exempt from the same difficulty. What is more incomprehensible than to make blind hazard, mere chance, the author and preserver of that beautiful order which displays itself in every part of the universe? But perhaps they would have the world to be eternal and self-existent: admitting this to be the case, what will be the consequence? They will fall back again into the impenetrable abyss of eternity. Dr. Young therefore says very justly :—

"Admit a God—that mystery supreme!
That Cause uncaused! all other wonders cease!
Deny him—all is mystery besides;
Millions of mysteries! each darker far
Than that thy wisdom would unwisely shun.
So weak our reason, and so great our God,
What most surprises in the sacred page,
Or full as strange, or stranger, must be true."

Since mysteries then present themselves to us on all sides, it must be extreme folly in man to revolt against them, and to take occasion from them of rejecting the evidences of Christianity. For let man look only into himself, and he will there discover various mysteries impenetrable to the greatest wit. The union of the soul with the body, their mutual dependence on each other, the nature of thought, the extent of the memory, the mechanism of the senses; even the production of a blade of grass, the formation of a mushroom, are things incontestible, of which we have daily experience, and yet they are enveloped in impenetrable darkness, and elude our most laborious researches. Why then should we be surprised at finding mysteries in religion, since all nature is full of them? The limited understanding of man meets with difficulties at every turn, and there exists only God, whose infinite knowledge extends to all things.

But there are mysteries, the enemies of religion reply, which God needed not to have revealed: why make them known to us, and exact our submission to them? why oblige us to renounce the light of reason, and to walk in the darkness of faith? But who art thou, O man, to demand of God an account of his conduct? Thou wishest to know why he has done so: It is because he is thy sovereign Lord and Master; it is because he has a right to require of the understanding a belief of things which it does not comprehend, grounded solely upon his divine testimony, in the same manner as he has a right to exact of the will a sacrifice of our passions, in consequence of the promises he makes to reward our fidelity. Let us suppose that a father, distinguished by his prudence and affectionate care of his children, should lay down a plan of conduct for the direction of his son, without discovering the particular reasons which influence him on this occasion. Although the son may be ignorant of his father's views, and may perhaps think that a different plan of life would be more suitable for him, yet he has no difficulty in submitting to his maturer judgment; and this blind obedience is founded in reason and prudence, be-

cause it is founded on the certainty which he has, that his father loves him, that his sole wish is to make him happy, that his views are more extensive than his own, and that, therefore, he is better acquainted with the means of procuring for him the happiness which he seeks. This comparison is very applicable to God, who is not only our father, but the best of fathers, whose lights are infinitely superior to our own, and who knows best what is conducive to our happiness. To such a father do we not owe the most cheerful and submissive obedience? or can we make a better use of our reason, than to subject it to his infinite wisdom and power?

As to the sublime reasons, which might induce the Divine Wisdom to reveal mysteries, they may be seen in the holy scriptures. It is sufficient here to show, that in case the Almighty had not condescended to discover to us the motives of his conduct, it would not have been the less adorable on that account; and to evince by arguments ad hominem, that the objections of Deists against the mysteries of revelation are unfounded, since they themselves labour under the same difficulty, being equally at a loss how to reconcile the phenomena of the natural and moral world with the attributes of the Deity.*

The following considerations, drawn from the nature of prophecy and the evidence of miracles, add much weight to the preceding arguments. Prophecy is the foreseeing and foretelling of some future event which cannot be known from any natural causes. Now there is only one omniscient God who sees into futurity, and infallibly knows whatever will come to pass; and therefore, if he has really foretold the great mysteries of the Christian religion, we ought to consider these predictions as means, which the divine wisdom has made use of, in order to prepare mankind to embrace them, and to regard them as divine. That this is matter of fact, will appear from a fair and impartial investigation. Whatever concerns Jesus Christ and the religion he was to establish, the circumstances of his birth, life, and death, his resurrection, the conversion of the Gentiles, the reprobation of the Jews, and the propagation of the Christian Church throughout the universe, all these events have been so clearly foretold by the prophets, that we need not hesitate to say of them in general what St. Jerome says in particular of the prophet Isaias, viz., that they may be considered rather as historians who relate what is past, than as prophets who foretell things to come. "Accordingly we find," says Mr. Addison, "that no argument made a stronger impression on the minds of learned heathens in the beginning of Christianity, nor contributed more to strengthen their faith in the history of our Saviour, than the predictions relating to him in the old prophetic writings, which were deposited among the hands of the greatest enemies to Christianity, and owned by them to have been extant many ages before his appearance. These eminent pagan converts were astonished to see the whole history of their Saviour's life published before he was born, and to find that the evangelists and pro-

* This argument *ad hominem* has not been sufficiently made use of against Deists, though a most powerful one to silence their objections. See "Deism Disarmed," a pamhlet printed for Cadell, an. 1794, by Mr. Walker.

phets, in their accounts of the Messiah, differed only in point of time, the one foretelling what should happen to him, and the other describing those very particulars as what had actually happened. This our Saviour himself was pleased to make use of as the strongest argument of his being the promised Messiah, and without it would hardly have reconciled his disciples to the ignominy of his death, as appears in that remarkable passage which mentions his conversation with the two disciples going to Emmaus on the day of his resurrection. See St. Luke xxiv. 13, to the end.

The heathen converts, after having travelled through all human learning, and fortified their minds with the knowledge of arts and sciences, were particularly qualified for examining these prophecies without prejudice or prepossession. If the Jews, on the one side, put an unnatural interpretation on these prophecies, to evade their force in their controversies with the Christians; or if some Christians overstrained several passages in their applications of them, as it often happens among men of the best understanding, when their minds are heated with any consideration that bears a more than ordinary weight with it; the learned heathens may be looked upon as neuters in the matter, when all these prophecies were new to them, and their education had left the interpretation of them free and indifferent. Besides, these learned men among the primitive Christians knew equally well how the Jews, who had preceded our Saviour, interpreted these predictions, and the several marks by which they acknowledged the Messiah would be discovered, and how those of the Jewish doctors who succeeded him had deviated from the interpretations and doctrines of their forefathers, on purpose to stifle their own conviction.

"This set of arguments had therefore," says Mr. Addison, "an invincible force with those pagan philosophers who became Christians,* as we find in most of their writings. They could not disbelieve our Saviour's history, which so exactly agreed with every thing that had been written of him, many ages before his birth, nor doubt of those circumstances being fulfilled in him, which could not be true of any person that lived in the world besides himself. This wrought the greatest confusion in the unbelieving Jews, and the greatest conviction in the Gentiles, who everywhere speak with astonishment of those truths they met with in this new magazine of learning which was opened to them, and carry the point so far as to think whatever excellent doctrine they had met with among pagan writers, had been stolen from their conversation with the Jews, or from the perusal of these writings which they had in their custody.†

I might here likewise advert to the prophecies which are recorded by the evangelists in the New Testament, the completion of which so forcibly evinces the truth of our Saviour's history. Who is not struck with admiration when he considers the accomplishment of that wonderful prediction of our

* Such as St. Justin, &c., Dial. cum Triphone. Orig., lib. 1. contra Cels., &c.

† That the oldest monuments of the heathen world, and all their ancient mythology, were derived from the scriptures, though disguised with fables, is fully proved by the learned Huet, in his Demonstrat. Evang., prop. 4, c. 3, &c.

Saviour concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, pronounced at a time when there was no likelihood nor appearance of it? I refer the reader to Josephus for an account of this extraordinary event, and shall only observe, that whoever, without knowing his character, compares the said account with what our Saviour foretold, would think the historian had been a Christian, and that he had nothing else in view but to adjust the event to the prediction.

What shall I say of that miraculous confirmation of our Saviour's prophecy which afterwards took place, when both Jews and Pagans united all their efforts, under Julian the Apostate, to baffle and falsify its completion? The great preparations that were made for rebuilding the temple, with the hurricane, earthquake, and eruptions of fire, that destroyed the work, and terrified those employed in the attempt from proceeding in it, are related by many historians of the same age, and the substance of the story testified both by Pagan and Jewish writers, as Ammianus Marcellinus, and Zamath-David. St. Chrysostom, in a sermon against the Jews, tells them this fact was then fresh in the memory even of their young men, that it happened but twenty years previously, and that it was attested by all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, where they might still see the marks of it in the rubbish of that work, from which the Jews desisted through fear, and which even Julian had not the courage to carry on. See an authentic history of this wonderful event gathered from the original records, and vindicated against the exceptions of certain sceptics, by Tillemont, tom. 7, p. 409, and by the learned Mr. Warburton, in his "Julian." See likewise Butler's SS. Lives, tom. 3, in the life of St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

The ancient Christians were so fully persuaded of the force of our Saviour's prophecies, and of the punishment which the Jews had drawn upon themselves and upon their children, by the treatment which the Messiah had received at their hands, that they did not doubt they would always remain an abandoned and dispersed people, the ridicule and astonishment of the nations, as they are to this present day. Their peculiar previlege of being God's people was now transferred to the body of Christians, to preserve the Church of Christ among all the conflicts, difficulties, and persecutions, in which it was engaged, as it had preserved the Jewish government and economy for so many ages, while it had the same truth and vital principle in it, notwithstanding it was so frequently in danger of being utterly abolished and destroyed.

To prophecy we must add the many wonderful and miraculous facts related in holy scripture: these are the credentials of its divine authority, the seal which God hath set to his revealed will. The principal miracles here adverted to were done in the face of a whole nation; they were so public and notorious, that the heathens themselves did not deny them, nor can they be called in question by any person who admits the truth of historical monuments. The authors who have committed these facts to writing were holy, excellent men, and therefore would not deceive; they were artless,

illiterate men, and therefore could not plan the horrible and difficult scheme of deluding mankind. The hope of gain did not influence them, for they were self-denying men, that left all to follow a Master, who "had nowhere to lay his head;" and whose grand initiating maxim was: "Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." They were so disinterested, that they secured nothing on earth, but hunger and nakedness, prisons, racks, and tortures; which indeed were all that they could and did expect in consequence of Christ's express declarations. Neither was a desire of honour the motive of their actions; for their Lord himself was treated with the utmost contempt, and had more than once assured them, that they should certainly share the same fate. Besides, they were humble men, not above working as mechanics for a scanty maintenance, and so little desirous of human regard, that they exposed to the world the meanness of their birth and occupations, their great ignorance and scandalous falls. Add to this, that they were so many, and lived at such a distance of time and place from each other, that had they been impostors, it would have been impracticable for them to contrive and carry on a forgery without being detected. And as they neither could nor would deceive the world, so they neither could nor would be deceived themselves: for they were, during days, months, and years, eye and ear witnesses of the things which they relate; and when they had not the fullest evidence of important facts, they insisted upon new proofs, and even upon palpable demonstrations; as for instance, Thomas, in relation to our Lord's resurrection:* and to leave us no room to question their sincerity, most of them joyfully sealed the truth of their doctrines with their own blood. Have so many and such marks of veracity ever met in any other authors?

The testimony of the sacred penmen being thus established, it is unnecessary to descend to a particular detail of all the miraculous events recorded both in the Old and New Testaments. The Jewish and Gospel dispensations mutually support and confirm each other: the miracles of the old law gave authority to the prophecies which announced a Mediator to come, and those of the new law evidently show that the said predictions are now fulfilled, and that God has actually sent the Messiah promised from the beginning of the world. As to the miracles of the old law, I shall mention only one, which is that related by Moses when the Israelites passed the Red Sea. The waters, on that occasion, divided themselves like a wall, on each side, and all the Israelites passed dry-shod to the opposite shore. The Egyptians, intent on pursuing them, followed the same course; but the Lord looked into the camp, and instantly the whole army were overwhelmed by the waves, insomuch that not one of them escaped to carry back to his countrymen the news of so dreadful a catastrophe; the effects of which, as we learn from the pagan historians themselves, were sensibly felt in Egypt for the space of four hundred years afterwards. As to the miracles of Christ in the New Testament, they were equally striking to an

* St. John xx 25.

astonished world. To feed five thousand persons with five fishes and two loaves; to raise to life one that had been dead for four days; to resuscitate himself in a still more wonderful manner; to mount up to heaven by his own power; to send down the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, and to change them, at once, into new men; these, and a multitude of other extraordinary works, are the prodigies which Jesus wrought as evidences of his divine mission. Mr. Locke, whose accurate talent in reasoning is so much celebrated, even by the sceptics and infidels of our times, after having established, in the strongest manner, the truth of Christ's miracles, goes on to observe that, "after his resurrection, he sent his apostles among the nations with the same power of working miracles; and that these were done in all parts so frequently, and before so many witnesses of all sorts, in broad daylight, that the enemies of Christianity never dared to deny them; no, not Julian himself, who neither wanted skill nor power to inquire into the truth; nor would have failed to have proclaimed and exposed it, if he could have detected any falshood in the history of the Gospel, or found the least ground to question the matter of fact published by Christ and his apostles. The number and evidence of the miracles done by our Saviour and his followers, by the power and force of truth, bore down this mighty emperor even in his own dominions: he durst not deny so plain matter of fact, which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and mission," says Mr. Locke, "unavoidably follows, notwithstanding all the artful suggestions Julian's wit could invent, or malice offer to the contrary."

But let us suppose, for a moment, that God should not have displayed his sovereign power in working these wonders for the confirmation of religion; would it not have been, says St. Austin, the greatest of all miracles, had the world in this case believed incomprehensible mysteries, and without any miracle subjected itself to all the painful duties which religion prescribes? Does not reason itself dictate, that nothing but the plainest matter of fact could induce so many thousands of prejudiced and persecuting Jews to embrace the humiliating, self-denying doctrine of the cross, which they so much despised and abhorred; and that nothing but the clearest evidence arising from undoubted truth, could make multitudes of lawless, luxurious heathens believe, and follow a doctrine so repugnant to flesh and blood;—at a time when the profession of it exposed persons of all ranks to the greatest contempt and most imminent danger. Here the case of the primitive Christians widely differed from that of Mahomet's followers: for these, in adhering to that warlike, violent impostor, saved their lives and properties, or attained to honor and riches, by their new, easy, and sensual religion; but those who devoted themselves to the meek, self-denying, crucified Jesus, were frequently spoiled of their goods, and cruelly put to death; or if they escaped with their lives, were looked upon as the very dregs of mankind.

I repeat it therefore with confidence, that nothing but the evidence and certainty of miracles could have converted to the religion of Jesus, the

emperors, whom it degraded from the rank of gods; the philosophers, whom it convinced of ignorance; the rich, whom it commanded to despise their riches; the poor, whom it taught to love poverty; lastly, the great bulk of mankind, whom it obliged to renounce the gratifications of sense, to love their enemies, and to hate themselves, by withdrawing from the pleasures and vain joys of this life. It is truly astonishing that the doctrine of a crucified God, which appeared folly to the eye of reason, should notwithstanding prevail over all the opposition raised against it on every side; that, however repugnant to man's darling passions, and preached only by a few ignorant and illiterate fishermen, it should finally overthrow the temples of paganism, and subject its wisest teachers and philosophers to a belief of mysteries incomprehensible to their understanding. Who does not here acknowledge the hand of God operating so great a change? Who does not confess his almighty power effecting with such humble instruments, so wonderful a conversion? What reasonable man will refuse to admit a religion to which the universe has submitted, and the divinity of which displays itself in such strange and glorious effects?

It may, perhaps, be expected that I should here advert to the objections of modern Freethinkers, and subjoin a refutation of them; but this has been so ably and so frequently performed by others, that a repetition of their answers would be totally superfluous. I shall, therefore, content myself with transcribing the following testimony of Rousseau, the great oracle of modern Anti-christians, because it is alone abundantly sufficient to vindicate the truth of the Gospel history, and to silence all the trifling cavils of infidel whitlings.

The testimony of Rousseau in favour of the Divinity of Jesus Christ and of his Gospel.

"I acknowledge to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration; the sanctity of the Gospel speaks to my heart. Peruse the works of the philosophers, with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Gospel! Is it possible that a book at once so simple and so sublime should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred Personage, whose history it contains, should be himself no more than a mere man? Is the tone he assumed, that of an enthusiast or of an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! what an affecting gracefulness in his mode of instructing! what elevation in his maxims! what profound wisdom in his discourses! what presence of mind, what subtlety, what exactness in his replies! how great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where is the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary good man loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking that all the fathers perceived it.

"What prepossession, what blind-

ness must it be, to compare the son of Sophroniscus (Socrates) to the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion between one and the other! Socrates, dying without pain, without ignominy, easily supports his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not done honour to his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, had been anything more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the system of morals: others before him had put them in practice. He had only therefore to say what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precept. Aristides had been just, before Socrates had defined what justice was; Leonidas had died for his country, before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people, before Socrates recommended sobriety; Greece abounded in virtuous men, before he had defined virtue. But where could Jesus learn among his countrymen that pure and sublime morality, of which he alone hath given both precept and example? The most sublime wisdom made itself heard amidst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people upon earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we say, the history of the Gospel is a mere fiction? Indeed it hath nothing like a fiction in it; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ: such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without removing it. It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to forge such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of such diction and of such morality; and the Gospel hath such characters of truth, so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that the inventor of such a history would be a greater object of wonder than the hero himself." (Emil., t. 3., p. 165. Let. to the Archbishop of Paris, Eng. Lond., 1763, p. 65.)

Nothing can be more beautiful or eloquent than this testimony, nothing more glorious to Jesus Christ and his Gospel. What a pity is it that this paradoxical author should, in other parts of his writings, have endeavoured, by his contradictions, to destroy the effect of this charming passage.

ON THE GREAT BENEFIT

OF DEVOUT MEDITATION ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST,

AND THE METHOD HOW THIS IS TO BE PERFORMED.

THE design of the following work is not only to give the literal sense of the Gospel, a solution of its principal difficulties, and a harmony of the four Evangelists; but likewise to add such moral reflections as tend to nourish true piety and a spirit of practical religion. On this account, the life of Christ will be found to contain excellent subjects for pious meditation, and as such it was recommended to Christians of every denomination. Most persons, indeed, have their favourite authors whom they read and admire; but certainly the Gospel ought with all Christians to have the first place, as it sets before us the sacred life and doctrine of Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, the ground and centre of all religion, and our only hope. We do not, however, mean to attach any blame whatever to those who make use of other books, either for their instruction or meditation; but to give them an exclusive preference to the Gospel of Christ, would be the same as to prefer cisterns that can hold no water capable of satisfying their thirst, before the very fountain of living water springing up to eternal life. The doctrine of Christ, who there speaks to us in person, infinitely surpasses the doctrine of all others; and whoever hath the spirit, will find therein a hidden manna.* Nothing, therefore, is more proper to enlighten the understanding, or to inflame the will, than to contemplate with a lively faith the life, doctrine, passion and death of the Son of God, as transmitted to us by the evangelists. All great masters of a spiritual life are agreed on this point, and, with St. Bonaventure, exceedingly recommend frequent and assiduous meditation on the life of Christ, as the best means of fortifying the soul against the vain and transitory things of this world, of supporting her under crosses and tribulations, and of discovering to her the snares and deceitful artifices of the devil.* Whoever is conversant in the spiritual works of this great saint, will there see how he dwells on this subject, and in how many different points of view he places the life and passion of our Saviour; teaching us in one place to meditate upon it by the hours of the day, in another by the days of the week, in another reducing it to hymns and vocal prayers, and in another making it into a tree of the life of Christ crucified. The holy man was sensible, on one hand, how important this exercise is to us; and knowing, on the other, how various men's inclinations are, he therefore made as it were so many different dishes of the same spiritual food.

Granada, that great master of spirituality, in his "Memorial of a Christian Life," teaches us how to meditate on the sacred mysteries of the life of Christ, and excellently describes the

* A Kempis, l. 1. c. 1.

* Jugis et assidua vitæ Christi meditatio contra vana et caduca mentem roborat, contra tribulationes et adversa fortificat, contra hostium, insidias et blandimenta fallacia erudit. —S. Bonav. l. Med. Vitæ Christi.

benefits to be derived from this holy exercise. "The contemplation of this admirable life," says he, "is that which above all things enlightens and clears our understanding, and gives us the greatest knowledge of God, which is the beginning of our happiness. The reason is, because in this mortal life we do not know God in himself but by his works; and this knowledge which they convey to us, is so much the more perfect, by how much the works are greater and more excellent. Now it being certain, that amongst all the works of God, the greatest is the humanity of Jesus Christ, i. e., God's becoming man for the sake of man; so it is this which most plainly demonstrates to us the greatness of the divine perfections, namely, his wisdom, goodness, charity, mercy, justice, providence, meekness, and other attributes. This is the mystical ladder which the patriarch Jacob saw, by which the angels ascended and descended, for this is the way by which spiritual men rise to the knowledge of God, and descend also to the knowledge of themselves.

"The consideration of the life of Christ has likewise another advantage. It is universally beneficial to all sorts of persons, as well to beginners, as to those who are more advanced in the way of perfection: for it is, in effect, the tree of life, planted in the midst of the paradise of the Church, which has higher and lower branches; the higher for spiritual souls, who may thus ascend to the throne of God, and to the contemplation of his perfections; and the lower are for the less advanced, who content themselves with contemplating the greatness of Christ's sufferings, and the enormity of their sins which occasioned them, in order hereby to excite that true sorrow and hatred which they deserve.

"One of the exercises most proper for a true Christian, is to be near Christ, and to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth. This is what the prophet Isaiah teaches, when, according to the Chaldaic version, he says that the just and the faithful would be the girdle of the reins of Christ, and would always walk about him. This is spiritually done when the true servant of Christ never departs from him, never loses him out of sight; but keeps him company in all places, and meditates on all the passages of his most holy life. For in reality Christ is nothing else to those who have a spiritual sense, but a sweet smelling-balsam, (as he is termed by the Spouse in the Canticles,) and therefore, in whatever passage of his life you behold him, he always diffuses an odour of sanctity, humility, charity, devotion compassion, meekness, and of all other virtues. Hence it is, that as he who always handles and carries about him perfumes, always smells of them; so the faithful Christian, who is daily conversant with Christ, comes in time to smell of Christ, that is, to resemble Christ in humility, charity, patience, obedience, and all other virtues."

Let us hear what another devout author says on this subject:* "If you desire to be powerfully convinced of your sad state by nature; if to be thoroughly sensible of God's hatred and punishment of sin; if rightly to

* *Meditations with Prayers on the Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, ascribed by some to Thomas à Kempis, and translated into English by Henry Lee, L L. B.—See likewise the same author throughout his celebrated work of the *Following of Christ.*

apprehend the excess of divine love in the forgiveness of it; if graciously to be delivered from the evil of unbelief; if deeply to be rooted in faith; if to be lovingly filled with the spirit; if to be perfectly cleansed from your corruptions and carnal lusts; if to be nobly enriched with amiable virtues and graces; if to be most eminently enlightened with the knowledge of the scriptures; if gloriously to triumph over every enemy; if to be abundantly comforted; if to have your conversation devoutly on earth; if frequently to feel compunction in your beds; if sweetly to weep in prayer; if to be fervently inflamed in meditation; if to persevere in good works; if to be replenished with spiritual joy; if to be carried up in holy rapture of soul; if to enjoy the secret things of God; if to die happily at last; if to reign eternally in heaven: exercise yourself in the life and sufferings of Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom the Father sent into the world, that he might reconcile it to God, and show forth to all men a most glorious example of all perfection, and bring his followers to an everlasting kingdom."

This was always the chief employment of the saints, who, as we read in their lives, never failed to make it their principal study to meditate on the life of Christ. St. Ignatius, in particular, as appears from his "Spiritual Exercises," was accustomed to recommend it to his followers, as the daily subject of their pious reflections, in order that they might be assimilated to Jesus Christ their model, and might show forth his spirit in their life and conversation.*

As an additional recommendation of the following work, it may be proper to observe, that by reading three or four chapters of it, every week, and meditating on them, the devout Christian may easily, in the course of the year, make himself acquainted with the whole text of the Gospel, and with all the actions, miracles, and instructions of his Redeemer, as transmitted to us by the four Evangelists. It is thus he will be enabled to acquire a thorough knowledge of our holy religion, and of the duties which it prescribes; it is thus he will learn to know Jesus Christ, and to form in his soul a new spirit according to the spirit of God; it is thus he will undeceive himself in regard to the erroneous notions of worldlings, and at the same time be secured against the weak superstitions and idle scruples of such as dishonour the cause of true piety; it is thus he will be filled with a lively faith of divine truths, with a firm hope of eternal blessings, and an ardent love of his sovereign Good: in short, it is thus he will be enabled to procure for himself that true peace of mind which surpasses all understanding, which sweetens our present evils, and which alone can support us under the various pressures and miseries of this mortal life.

Many persons complain of the dryness which they experience in meditation. But, without adverting to other

* There is an excellent work on this subject by Girandau, entitled, "l'Evangile Médité," in 8 vols., edited by l'Abbé Duquesne, of which we have availed ourselves in some passages. But his Meditations are too diffuse to enter into our plan, and seem but ill to accord with his own advice, which he gives in the preface, viz. that we should particularly attach ourselves to the words of the sacred text as the word of God, and pay attention to the words of men only as far as they may be necessary to make us understand those of God, which are alone deserving our love and affection.

causes, may not this spiritual aridity be in part ascribed to the barren and abstracted subjects of their meditation; whereas here the matter is both abundant and interesting, and the most sublime truths are accompanied with such circumstances of time, place and person, as tend very much to fix the imagination, and prevent that tediousness and disgust to which beginners are chiefly subject. Here truth is presented in action, assuming, as it were, a body, and making itself palpable. Certain it is, that innumerable saints have found their greatest comfort and consolation in meditating on the Gospel, and have spent even whole nights in this holy exercise, regretting the return of day, which interrupted their sweet communications with heaven.

But as many Christians have imbibed prejudices unfavourable to meditation, falsely imagining it to be something extremely difficult, and almost impossible, it will be proper here to show how unfounded these prejudices are, and to state in what this holy exercise of meditation consists.* By meditation we mean nothing else but a serious reflection upon the holy maxims of the Gospel; upon the great and saving truths of faith; upon our duties towards Almighty God; upon the best means of facilitating and securing our happiness, or upon the obstacles that may retard or hinder our eternal felicity. Now this reflection naturally produces good and pious desires, holy affections, and sincere and efficacious resolutions of reducing those good desires to practice, and of executing all our good designs, by the use of those means which by our reflection we find likely to advance us in the work of our eternal salvation, and to help us to overcome whatever obstacles oppose our progress. The necessity of this sort of reflection or meditation, in order to salvation, is admitted by the holy Fathers as a fundamental maxim in christian morality. Hence St. Bernard observes, that prayer and meditation are of equal necessity; "for meditation," says he "discovers what we stand in need of, and prayer obtains from Almighty God whatever we want; the one shows us the way, the other brings us to our journey's end. Meditation discovers the dangers that encompass us: prayer guides us safely through them."†

If meditation be necessary, it is also easy, at least to those who have a sincere desire of their eternal salvation; consequently nothing is more ill-grounded than the prejudices which people are apt to entertain against this holy exercise. This will manifestly appear if we reflect on the nature of meditation, which, as we have just observed, consists in the exercise of the three faculties of the soul, our memory, understanding, and will; now we have only to apply these faculties to the great affair of our salvation, in the same manner as we make use of them in considering any affair that concerns our temporal interest, or worldly employments.

A merchant has no difficulty in reasoning and reflecting upon what interests his commerce; a farmer upon his tillage; a tradesman upon his concerns.

* See Nepvue.

† See this Saint's admirable book "On Consideration," which he dedicated to Pope Eugenius, and in which he sets this truth in the most striking light.

These persons make frequent reflections upon the past, in order to know what proved advantageous, and what detrimental; and however deficient in genius, they easily discover from this retrospective view, by what means they may in future succeed in their business, and guard against those accidents which by experience they know to be prejudicial. Now what hinders them from doing the same in the business of their salvation? Why should they not, in like manner, reflect upon what may be useful and advantageous to them, and upon what on the contrary is detrimental, and attended with danger? Why should they not examine well the state of their soul? how it is disposed and inclined? and consider what they ought in future to pursue, and what to avoid? This is all the mystery of meditation, which is, therefore, evidently within the reach of the most ordinary capacity, since it is only what the world daily practises with regard to temporal concerns; it requires only a good will and a sincere desire of conversing with God, by thinking of him and loving him. To facilitate the exercise of it, and more effectually to secure its incomparable advantages, the following method of meditation is recommended by St. Francis de Sales, and other spiritualists.

1. Place yourself in the presence of God by an act of faith, whereby you know and believe him to be every where present. Prostrate yourself before this sovereign Lord, whose majesty fills heaven and earth—saying with Abraham: "How dare I speak to my God, who am but dust and ashes?" Then make an act of contrition for all your sins, these being the greatest obstacles in our communication with God; and implore with fervour and humility his light and grace, that your soul may derive benefit from this important exercise of meditation. This is the preparation.

2. Apply the memory to call to mind that christian truth or mystery upon which you intend to meditate, and think of it seriously, so as to let it sink deep into your soul. This is the proper exercise of our memory.

3. However contracted our capacity may be, it is morally impossible but that some reflections will arise and present themselves to us concerning that truth, which we make the subject of our meditation; and one reflection is sufficient to entertain us, if we endeavour to relish and penetrate its meaning: hence will naturally follow a retrospection or looking back upon ourselves, which is a kind of second reflection, whereby we apply to ourselves that truth which we before considered, in order thence to draw some conclusion for reforming and better regulating our manner and way of life. It is thus we exercise our understanding.

4. In consequence of our understanding having made this reflection, and received this light, the will must next feel several emotions or affections, according to the several objects and reflections that have occurred. For if those objects are in themselves great and lovely, they will naturally excite in our will, love, admiration, gratitude, desire, hope, and joy: if they are in themselves terrible, they will produce in our hearts, fear, aversion, horror, confusion, sorrow, and repentance. In these acts consists the exercise of the will.

It is to be observed, that these affections are the principal part of mental prayer, because they touch and move the heart in order to our improvement, and hence they are chiefly to be insisted upon. Whereas the noblest ideas, the most sublime speculations, are not only useless when they excite no sentiment in the will, but too often expose us to pride and illusion.

5. From these affections pass on to good resolutions of a serious amendment of your life, particularly with regard to those failings to which you are most subject; and determine with yourself to begin immediately to put these good resolutions in practice on every occasion that shall offer.

Lastly, after making good resolutions offer them up to God, and acknowledge yourself unable to keep them without the assistance of his grace. Throw yourself, therefore, into the arms of his infinite mercy, place your whole confidence in him, and earnestly beg of him, through the merits of Jesus Christ, that he would perfect the work he has begun, and enable you, in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil, to adhere to your good resolutions, for the glory of his holy name, and the security of your eternal salvation.

This is the method of mental prayer prescribed by St. Francis de Sales, and other great masters of a spiritual life, as one of the most important exercises of a christian life, and such as ought daily to be performed by as many as wish to serve God in good earnest. "With desolation," says the prophet Jeremy, "is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart."

Having explained the method of mental prayer, I shall, in order to render it still more, easy, proceed to give some examples upon the different subjects which it comprises.

The subjects upon which we meditate may be reduced to the following heads. 1. Historic facts that are contained in holy scripture, as the conversion of Mary Magdalen, &c. 2. Moral truths of Christianity; for instance, the importance of our salvation, the necessity of repentance, &c. 3. The mysteries of our blessed Saviour's life; for example, his incarnation, nativity, and passion, &c. 4. Maxims of the holy Gospel; as the following: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me," &c. 5. The parables of the Gospel, as that of the barren fig-tree, &c. 6. The actions or discourses of our blessed Saviour; e. g. his washing the feet of his apostles, his sermon on the mount, &c. 7. The attributes and perfections of Almighty God; as for example, his infinite power, mercy, goodness, &c. I shall here subjoin the application of the method which was given above, to some of the foregoing subjects; and first, to one of the mysteries of our Saviour's life.

SUBJECT.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

THE EXERCISE OF THE MEMORY.

Read and consider what is said hereafter concerning this mystery in chap. 8. of the following book; hence you will see the poor and miserable lodging

in which our Saviour chose to be born at Bethlehem, where he was laid in a manger upon straw, in great want of all things, and destitute of all human comfort and assistance.

The Exercise of the Understanding; or Reflection upon this Mystery.

He whom I see in this poor manger is God; and if God, he cannot but be infinitely powerful, and infinitely wise. If he be infinitely powerful, nothing could force or oblige him to put himself in so low, poor, and suffering a condition as this. It must be then his own free choice, to convince us that he prefers this lowly condition to any other. And if his wisdom be infinite, he has certainly all the knowledge requisite to make a good choice, and therefore cannot be mistaken. Whence it must necessarily and evidently follow, that the state of humiliation, of poverty, and of suffering, which Jesus has preferred to all the riches and pleasures of the world, is infallibly the best, however repugnant to flesh and blood, and to the received notions of worldlings.

Application of this Reflection; or the looking back upon ourselves.

Have I been hitherto of the same opinion and judgment with my blessed Saviour in this particular? or, rather, have I not been of a quite contrary opinion? Either he or I, then, must have been deceived: but it was impossible for him to be deceived, seeing he is Eternal Wisdom, and therefore infallible. Wherefore it is I who must certainly have been deluded; I have lived all this while in a gross error.

The Exercise of the Will.

The affections that follow this reflection are, 1. Of admiration to see God himself reduced to so poor and low a condition, out of pure love to us, and to leave us an example for our imitation. 2. Of love and gratitude, for so great and wonderful a goodness. 3. Of confusion and grief, for having lived so long in a persuasion contrary to that of my Saviour, condemning by my conduct his blessed choice, and misspending the best part of my life in pursuit of those imaginary goods for which he always showed the greatest contempt. 4. Of fear, lest if I do not follow and imitate my blessed Saviour in his humility and poverty, I shall lose that infinite happiness of partaking one day with him in his everlasting glory in heaven. 5. Of a firm resolution to reform my conduct and manner of life, begging of my dearest and divine Jesus, who for my sake was thus born in a poor stable, that he would give me courage to imitate his example.

Second Application of the same Method to a Maxim of the Gospel.

SUBJECT.

"IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME." MATT. XVI. 14.

THE EXERCISE OF THE MEMORY.

Consider attentively these words in chap. 66. of the following work. and

imagine that you hear your blessed Saviour addressing this maxim to you as well as to his disciples.

The Exercise of the Understanding; or, Reflection upon this Maxim.

We cannot be disciples of Jesus Christ, i. e., we cannot be true, good Christians, unless we follow him: and we cannot follow him, unless we deny ourselves and carry our cross. What is it to deny ourselves, but to curb our own humour, to renounce our inclinations, desires, interest, all the disorderly motions of our heart, and, in fine, to renounce all that may prove dangerous or criminal? And what is it to carry our cross, but to tame our passions, to mortify our senses, and embrace things disagreeable to flesh and blood, or at least to bear willingly and with patience all afflictions which it shall please God to lay upon us.

The Application of this Maxim; or, the Retrospection on ourselves.

We make profession of being Christians, and of following Jesus Christ; we are then under an indispensable obligation of denying ourselves, of daily carrying our cross, since in the judgment of our blessed Saviour, the one follows necessarily from the other: but do we practise it, or rather, do we not practise the reverse? Do we not act continually according to our own humour? Do we not yield to whatever is pleasing to our natural inclinations? Do we not abhor and avoid, with all possible care, whatever mortifies or puts any constraint upon our wills? Do we not run away from the cross as fast as we can, and murmur when God sends us any trial? And can we call this following Christ, and being a Christian, whilst we act quite contrary to what the name of Christian implies?

The Exercise of the Will.

The affections that arise from these reflections are, 1. Of astonishment, to see the generality of those who bear the name of Christians, take so little care, and attend so little to the duties of a Christian. Alas! instead of following our blessed Saviour, as they are bound to do by their baptismal engagements, they endeavour, in a manner, to oppose his doctrine both in their opinion and conduct. 2. Of confusion, to see that we ourselves, who have the honour to bear the name of Christians, are of the number of those blind people, who dishonour Christianity by a disorderly and sensual life. 3. Of grief, for having been till now such cowardly betrayers of our profession, such unfaithful disciples of Jesus Christ. 4. Of fear, lest the character of Christian should serve at the day of judgment for our greater condemnation; when, on the one side, the obligations annexed to so honourable a quality will be manifested to us; and, on the other, our manner of life will be discovered to have been widely opposite to those obligations. 5. Of a firm resolution to fulfil better in future all the duties of a true Christian, imploring mercy and pardon of our blessed Saviour for past faults, and begging the assistance of his holy grace for the time to come, that we may take up our cross and carry it after him with courage and perseverance.

The Application of the same Method to a Parable of the Gospel.

SUBJECT.

OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

THE EXERCISE OF THE MEMORY.

Read and remember the parable of the barren fig-tree, as set down in the 13th chapter of St. Luke, and the 87th of the following work.

The Exercise of the Understanding; or Reflection upon this Parable.

The barren fig-tree, that produced abundance of leaves but no fruit, is a lively representation of those Christians, who having a fair outside, deceive themselves, and impose on others by bearing no fruit: because they do not apply themselves to works of charity, and to the practice of other christian virtues, but lead lives not in appearance disorderly, yet, in effect, unprofitable and barren of good works. For not to do good, is a great evil; and hence the unprofitable servant in the Gospel, was condemned to be cast into outward darkness, i. e., into hell.

The Application of this Reflection; or, looking back upon ourselves.

Am not I like this barren fig-tree? Do I not content myself with bearing a fair show of leaves, without having any fruit? i. e., have I not the outward appearance, without the real substance of virtue? seeking the approbation and vain applause of men, who judge by the outside, without taking due care to please God, who penetrates the inmost recesses of my soul. Do I not mistake those actions which are the effects of a good natural disposition, or of a good education, or which are done out of human respect, to be the real fruits of true virtue and solid piety? and does not some secret vanity, the desire of preserving my reputation, or of being accounted a person of great probity, pass with me for solid virtue? In fine, does not a life, which is in effect very unprofitable, appear to me altogether innocent?

The Exercise of the Will.

The affections that naturally arise from this reflection are, 1. Of wonder, considering the patience of Almighty God, who has waited and borne with me not only for three years, like the master of the fig-tree, although instead of good fruit I have brought forth nothing but leaves; but who has likewise suffered me for many years to go on in my wicked course of life. 2. Of confusion and sorrow, for having made so little use and benefit of all that care which his divine mercy has taken, in order to cultivate and improve me by his multiplied graces; notwithstanding which I have long abused his wonderful patience, and taken occasion from thence to sin more freely. 3. Of fear, lest God to punish me for not corresponding with his grace, should at last deprive me of it, and pronounce that terrible sentence against me: "Cut him down as an unprofitable tree, and cast him into the fire." 4. Of a firm resolution to bring forth hereafter the fruits of good works, and of such vir-

tues as are suitable to my condition; for this purpose I will address myself to my good angel, to beg his assistance, that I may hereafter improve more by the care he shall please to take of me, and may correspond with those graces he shall obtain for me, of the great Master of the vineyard.

This same method may easily be applied to any one of our Saviour's actions or discourses, or to any part of the Evangelical history. What is more easy than to read a history, and to make it a subject of our reflections? What history contains more instructive and interesting matter than the history of the Gospel, which exhibits the life of a God made man, how he lived, acted, and conversed among us? Moreover, the things here proposed to our consideration, are the very basis of our religion, the object of our faith, the rule of our conduct, the foundation of our hopes, and the source of that eternal felicity which we hereafter expect.

It only remains for me, to exhort the pious reader not to be discouraged at the opposition which the devil never fails to raise against mental prayer, by suggesting a thousand imaginary difficulties. Let him be only diligent in this important exercise; let him continue to dig in this evangelical field; and he will not fail at last to discover a treasure of inestimable value, such as will abundantly recompense him for all his labour.



CHRIST'S PRAYER.

Prayers

TO BE SAID

BEFORE AND AFTER READING

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

A PRAYER BEFORE READING.

BE Thou ever adored and praised, O Lord, who not content to instruct us by thy prophets, has vouchsafed in person to become our teacher and our model: grant us grace to profit by thy heavenly doctrine, and to imitate thy blessed example. All that is written of thee, dear Jesus, in thy Gospel, is truth itself; there is nothing but wisdom in thy actions, power and goodness in thy miracles, light and instruction in thy words. To whom shall we go, but to thee who hast the words of eternal life? Assist me with thy grace, to practise what thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest.

A PRAYER AFTER READING.

O LORD Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, mercifully grant me grace to imitate thy holy life and conversation, that having thee for my guide, I may never go astray after worldly vanities; but may direct all my thoughts, words, and actions to thy greater honour and glory: who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

A PRAYER OF VENERABLE BEDE TO CHRIST

I BESEECH thee, O good Jesus, that as thou hast mercifully granted me to find here the sweet words of thy heavenly wisdom, so thou wouldst graciously vouchsafe to bring me hereafter to thyself the very fountain of all wisdom, that I may always behold thee face to face: who livest and reignest God for endless ages. Amen.

The devout Christian may read likewise the Litany of Jesus, the Jesus' Psalter, or the Golden Litany; which last briefly commemorates the chief mysteries of our Saviour's life and death. See the "Double Manual."

THE
LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

PART I.

PREFACE FROM ST. LUKE.

"WHEREAS many have endeavoured to set forth in order a narration of the things, which have been accomplished amongst us," and the truth of which is confirmed by the fullest evidence, "as they have delivered them to us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it hath seemed good also to me, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the truth of those things wherein thou hast been instructed," and mayest distinguish them from those inaccurate accounts, which either have been already, or may hereafter be published on this subject.

St. Luke does not here specify the names of those from whom he received this narrative; yet it cannot be doubted that the B. V. Mary communicated to him what he has committed to writing in the two first chapters, besides other particulars, since his authors were eye-witnesses, as he expressly testifies. It is highly probable that he derived some information from St. Paul, whose disciple he was, and who received and learned the gospel, which he preached, from the revelation of Jesus Christ, though he was not himself an eye-witness.—That Theophilus, to whom St. Luke addresses his gospel, was a real, and not a fictitious person, is the most probable opinion, as appears from the title of most Excellent, which was only applied to persons of distinguished rank; nevertheless, as the word Theophilus signifies a Lover of God, it is, in this sense, applicable to every true Christian, who may consider this gospel* as addressed to himself, and as containing the good tidings of eternal life.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINITY AND INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST. MARK I. JOHN I.

BEFORE we proceed to the temporal birth and life of the Son of God, it may not be improper to give some account of his divine and eternal generation. Men write the genealogy of the great personages of the earth to raise their

* The English word *gospel* (in Greek *evangelion* and in Latin *evangelium*) signifies, in general, *good news*, and by a metonymy, is used to signify the history of that good news of the birth and life, the miracles and doctrine, the death and resurrection of our Saviour Christ; all of which make up the glad tidings which we call the Gospel. From this etymology of the word the persons who have recorded the life and actions of our Saviour, have acquired the title of *Evangelists*, or writers of the Gospel. The works of this kind which are received by the Church as canonical, are but four, viz., those of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.—See their lives in Tillemont, or in Butler's Lives of the Saints.

renown for the nobility of their blood, and for the great achievements of their ancestors, whilst yet they are unable to distinguish themselves by their own personal merit. To Jesus Christ belong two genealogies and two births, because he has two natures. He is both God and man, and in one only person, unites the nature of God and the nature of man. As man, he descends from a long series of men, being of the tribe of Juda, and of the family of David: as God, he has only God for his Father, being born of him before all ages, and perfectly equal to him. As man, he is born in time; as God, he is born, and exists from all eternity.*

"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," according to St. John, thus describes his divine and eternal nativity, and the reasons for which he was made man. "In the beginning was the Word,† and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This" Word "was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. The" Word "was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: (and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father;) full of grace and truth."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In these words St. John describes the Son of God by three characters expressive of his divinity. The first is his eternal existence: "in the beginning," i. e., before all time, "was the Word," the eternal Word, the increated Wisdom, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. The second character is his being distinct from God the Father, which evidently points at a distinction of persons; for a person is really distinct from him, with whom he is. Now "the Word was with God" the Father from all eternity, and therefore was distinct from his person. But, lest

* Duæ nativitatis Christi intelliguntur; una divina, altera humana; una per quam efficeremur, altera per quam reficeremur; ambæ mirabiles, illa sine matre, ista sine patre.—S. Aug. in Jo. trac. 12. 58.

† We may here observe that Jesus Christ is called by the Evangelist the *Word*, i. e., the speech, thought, or conception of God. And this perhaps is the best comparison to express the manner or way of his eternal generation: for as our mind, reflecting on itself, forms there, and generates an image or idea of itself, which image or idea by divines is called the *word* of our mind, by which it speaks, as I may say, or expresses all its knowledge of itself; so may it be with regard to God, (as far as human things may be compared with divine) his eternal knowledge of himself being infinitely perfect, there may thence proceed the eternal *Word* of God, a *Word* as perfect as himself, who is another person, and yet the same God with him who forms it. However it is better, says the Roman Catechism, to contemplate what faith proposes to us concerning this mystery, and with a sincere heart to believe and confess that Jesus Christ is *true God* and *true man*; begotten indeed, *as God*, of the Father before all ages and generations; but *as man*, born in time of his mother the Virgin Mary.

this distinction of persons might convey an idea of a diversity of nature or essence, and lest under the words two persons, we might understand two Gods, the third character is his consubstantiality with the Father, "and the word was God;" consequently the same God as the Father; for there cannot be more Gods than one.—The Evangelist makes a short recapitulation of these three characters, by repeating that "this Word was in the beginning with God." He then represents him as an active cause or principle; 1. In the order of nature: "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made." Hence it clearly follows, that he is not a creature; because all things having been made by him, if he himself were made too, he must have been made by himself, and, consequently, he would have had a being before he was made or created, as we conceive a workman to exist before his work. 2. He represents the Word as the principle of life and light in the order of grace, acting upon sin and darkness in order to give light and life to our souls. This occasions the Evangelist to pass forward to the incarnate state of the Word: "In him was life," that essential life which consists in living wisdom, in eternal truth, and in sovereign justice; the knowledge and love of which constitute the true life of man. This divine life assuming a visible body became a light to communicate itself to mankind, by imparting to it the knowledge of truth, and the love of justice or sanctity. This is "the light that shineth in darkness," enlightening the eyes of men blinded by their passions, and plunged in the dark night of error and sin. Christ diffused on all sides the rays of his light, by the purity of his doctrine, by the example of his holiness, and by miracles of the most beneficent kind. "And" yet "the darkness" which sin had spread over the hearts of men "did not comprehend it." It was to prevent this abuse of the divine goodness, that "there was a man sent from God, whose name was John" the Baptist. "This man came for a witness to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him" in this light. "He was not the light" himself, "but was to give testimony of the light," by erecting the standard of the Messias, and placing himself at the head of such as should receive him. "That" person, to whom he bore witness, "was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," in different degree and measure, yet superabundantly where no obstacle is set against it.

Although this mission of John had all the success, which God, who cannot fail in the execution of his designs, had foreseen; yet it met not with that reception which might naturally have been expected. The Word incarnate, notwithstanding this testimony of John, was rejected by the synagogue, whilst a very small number of its children acknowledged him for the Messiah. This criminal indifference of the former is thus recorded by the Evangelist, and contrasted with the glorious reward of the latter. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him," and yet "the world knew him not; he came into his own" inheritance, viz., the Jews, whom he had made his chosen people, "and his own received

him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the" adoptive "sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born," by a new spiritual birth in the sacrament of baptism, "not of blood," by circumcision, as children of the seed of Abraham; "nor of the will of the flesh," by carnal descent from their parents; "nor of the will of man," by human adoption; "but of God," by faith and divine grace; who receives us for his children through faith in Christ Jesus, and as such sanctifies us by his Spirit; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. "And" it was with the view of elevating man to this dignity, that "the Word was made flesh," becoming man by a true and real union of the divine and human nature in one person, which is the person of God the Son, "and he dwelt amongst us," in all meekness and humility. "And we saw his glory," being eye-witnesses to his miracles, and to the various wonderful actions of his life, which truly displayed "the glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth."—What a subject of consolation to the faithful Christian, that Christ has brought us both truth and grace: truth to teach us our duty, and grace to enable us to practise it. Moreover, as he alone could procure for us the pardon of sin, and that interior justification which the law of Moses could not give, in this sense, he may truly be said to have possessed the fulness of truth, having completely fulfilled all former types and shadows of spiritual blessings, giving us an inheritance in the celestial Canaan, and an entrance into the true tabernacle of heaven.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANNUNCIATION AND CONCEPTION OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. LUKE I.

As the life of Jesus Christ and that of his precursor St. John are interwoven together, the natural order requires that we should begin with the history of the latter, as being introductory to that of the former. This consideration makes St. Luke relate, in the first place, the wonders that signalized the conception of the holy Precursor.

"In the days of Herod" the Great, "the king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zachary, of the rank of Abia," the eighth of the twenty-four families, which, according to the regulation of David,* were to serve by turns in the temple: "and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elisabeth. And they were both just," not only in the sight of men, but also "in the sight of God, walking blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord." This however does not imply that they were exempt from all lesser failings, such as are called venial; but only from those greater sins which would have made them forfeit the grace and favour or

* 1 Par. 244.

God. "And they had not a son, because Elisabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. Now it came to pass, when he executed the priestly function in the order of his rank before God, according to the custom of the priestly office, it fell to his lot to offer up incense, when he entered into the temple of the Lord (for the priests drew lots for the different functions to be weekly performed by them.) And all the multitude of the people was praying without," in that part of the temple called the court of the Israelites: "And an angel of the Lord appeared to him standing on the right side of the altar of incense," which would be to the left hand of the officiating priest; "and Zachary seeing him was troubled, and fear seized him:" perhaps the more so, as it was a common opinion amongst the Jews that death would be the consequence of seeing an angel.* "But the angel said to him: Fear not Zachary, for thy petition is heard" respecting the coming of the Messias; "and thy wife Elisabeth shall bring forth to thee a Son," who shall be his precursor; "and thou shalt call his name John," which signifies Grace, as a happy presage that the reign of grace is at hand. "And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth; for he shall be great," not only in the estimation of men, who are easily deceived, but also "in the sight of the Lord: and he shall neither drink wine nor strong drink, and shall be replenished with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,"* by bringing them to the knowledge of Christ. "He shall also go before him in the spirit and power of Elias," labouring with the same zeal and fervour as did that holy prophet, "that he may turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,"† i. e. may recall back "the incredulous" Jews of these later times, "to the prudence" and faith "of the" ancient "just;" and may thus "prepare unto the Lord a perfect people," and properly disposed to receive him. "And Zachary," doubting the truth of this promise, "said to the angel: Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. And the angel answering said to him: I am Gabriel," one of the chief angels, "who stand before God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold thou shalt be dumb,‡ and shalt not be able to speak until the day when these things come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words which shall be fulfilled in their time. Now the people were waiting for Zachary, and wondered that he staid so long in the temple: and coming out he could not speak to them," either to bless them, or to give a reason of his delay. "And they perceived," from his agitation

* Gen. xvi 17. Chap. xxii. 15. Exod. xx. 19, &c.

* It is evident that the Messias, before whom St. John was to prepare the way, is the Lord and the God of the children of Israel, as appears by the context. Hence, this passage affords a proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ, as strong perhaps, and as express as any contained in the holy scriptures.

† Abraham, Moses. and the Prophets were displeased, and as it were estranged from their rebellious and disobedient children the Jews; but now seeing them converted to Christ, and embracing the same faith and hope as themselves had, they will rejoice and be reconciled to them. This their conversion was begun in part by St. John, and will hereafter be completed by Elias, at the end of the world.

‡ It does not however appear that Zachary sinned mortally on this occasion, because his incredulity proceeded more from a perturbation of mind than from wilful obstinacy.

and trouble, "that he had had a vision in the temple. And he made signs to them, and remained" not only "dumb," but deaf also, as appears from the Greek text, where we find that instead of speaking they rather made signs to him. "and it came to pass as soon as the days of his office were expired, he departed to his house" on the mountains of Judea. "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived and kept herself private five months," in the uninterrupted exercises of piety and devotion, "saying: It is thus the Lord hath done to me in the days wherein he hath had regard to take away my reproach among men," on account of barrenness: "behold he has made me fruitful, at an age when fecundity generally becomes a subject of confusion."

CHAPTER III.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AND THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST. LUKE I.

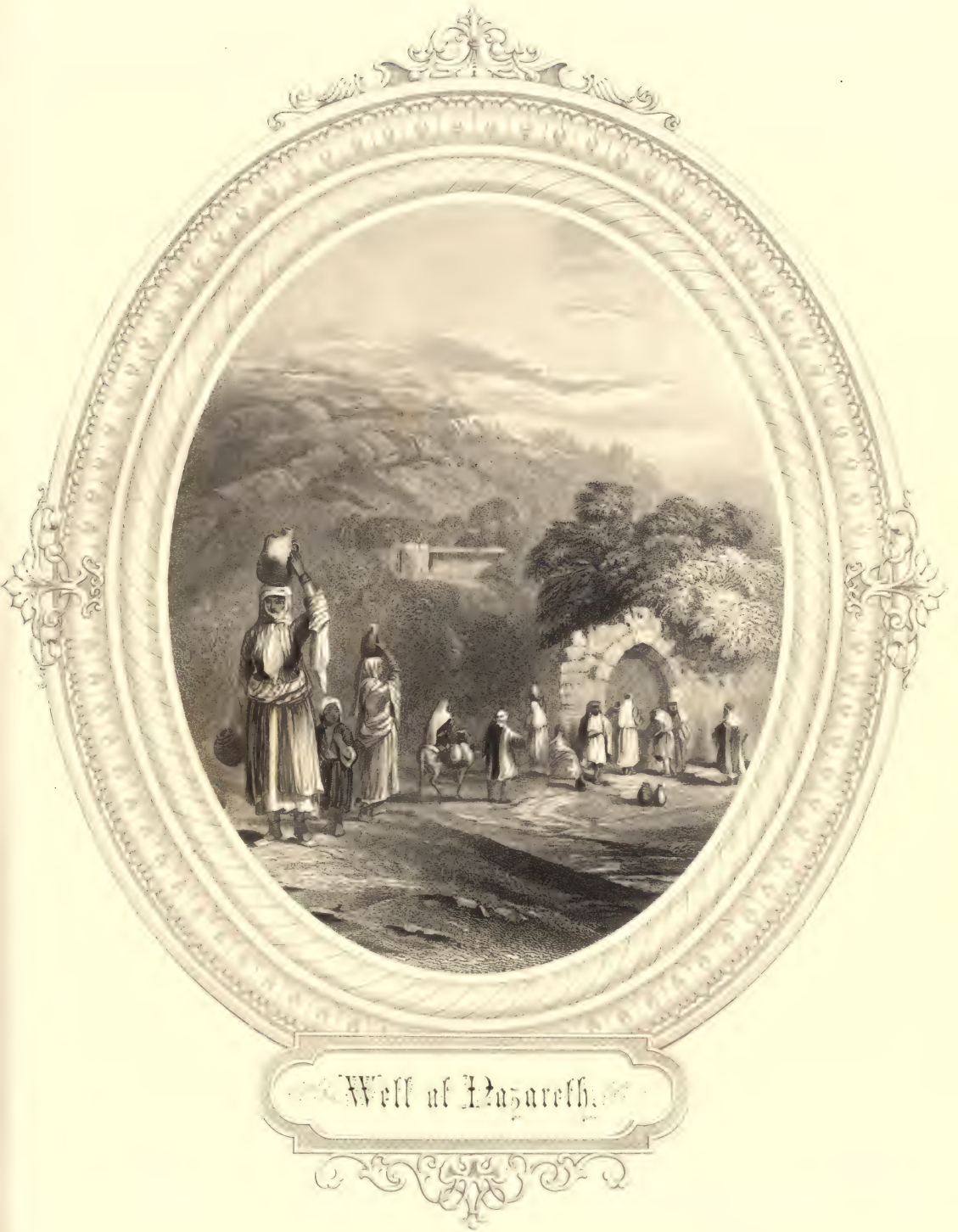
St. John was conceived after the fast of the Expiation, which fell on the 10th of the 7th month, called Tisri, and which corresponds pretty nearly to the end of September and the beginning of October: because from the 24th of September till the 24th of June, the day of St. John's nativity, there are precisely nine months. It was six months after his conception, that God sent the same angel Gabriel* to negotiate with the Blessed Virgin concerning the great mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ It is thus related by St. Luke.

"In the 6th month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,† to a virgin espoused to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary.* And the angel," in a visible,† corporeal form, "entering in" respectfully "said to her: Hail full of grace, our Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women.‡ Which words when she had

* Gabriel signifies the strength of God; as such he was proper to announce him who is the Lord of Hosts, and who came to overthrow the powers of hell.

† Nazareth was a city of the Lower Galilee, situated in the south part of that province, and therefore not far from the confines of Samaria to the south, and nearer to the territories of Tyre and Sidon to the north-west. According to Mr. Maundrell's account, in his journey from Aleppo, it is at present only an inconsiderable village, lying in a kind of round *concave* valley, on the top of a high hill. Here is a convent built over the place of the *annunciation*, on the spot where the B. Virgin received the joyful message brought her by the angel.

* And the *name of the virgin was Mary.*—The word Miriam, or Mary, is expounded by St. Jerome from different etymologies, to signify in Hebrew, *a Star of the Sea*, and in Chaldaic, *Lady*. Both these names admirably agree to her who is the glorious Queen of Heaven, and our Patroness and *Star* to direct us in the stormy sea of this world. "O you," cries out St. Bernard, "who find yourselves tossed in the tempests of this world, turn not your eyes from the brightness of this star, if ye would not be overwhelmed by storms. If the winds of temptations rise; if you fall among the rocks of tribulations; look up at the star, call on *Mary*. If you are tossed by the waves of pride, ambition, detraction, jealousy, or envy, look up at the star, call on *Mary*. If anger, covetousness, or lust, beat on the vessel of your soul, look up on *Mary*. If you begin to sink in the gulf of melancholy and despair, think on *Mary*. In dangers, in distresses, in perplexities, think on *Mary*, call on *Mary*; let her not depart from your mouth; let her not depart from your heart; and that you may obtain the suffrage of her prayers, never depart from the example of her conversation."—S. Ber. hom.



Well at Nazareth.

heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what kind of salutation this should be," that is, whether it was a favour from God, or a snare of the devil. We may admire her guarded conduct on this occasion, which shows that she possessed a degree of wisdom and strength of mind far superior to that of her sex. "And the angel," seeing her uneasiness, "said to her: Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God," and art blessed beyond any other woman, having the honour of being raised to the highest dignity which God could confer upon his creatures. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father [his maternal ancestor,] and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever," that is, over the Church of God composed of Jews and Gentiles; "and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Such are the characters of Christ's greatness here foretold by the angel. He shall be great: 1. In his descent or origin, being truly the eternal Son of God. 2. In his dignity, being the great King that was to reign over the throne of his father David. Hence, from the first moment of his conception, God conferred upon him the sacred character of the Messiah, anciently promised to David; in this quality Christ afterwards manifested himself to the world during the course of his ministry; likewise after his resurrection and triumphant ascension into heaven; and such he will be universally acknowledged at the day of judgment. But his kingdom is not of this world; it is only of a spiritual nature: he reigns over the minds of men by faith, over their hearts by charity, and lastly he will reign over all mankind for ever hereafter either in a state of happiness or misery, according to each one's respective merits. His throne is called the throne of David, because the reign of David prefigured that of the Messiah. 3. His kingdom extends not only over a part of the twelve tribes, but over the whole house of Jacob, i. e., the whole Church of God, composed of Jews and Gentiles, viz. of the children of Jacob according to the flesh, and of the children of Jacob according to the spirit; who see God by faith, and who live in hopes of seeing him face to face hereafter in glory. The 4th character of Christ's kingdom is its duration; for it is not to be interrupted by captivities, nor diminished by length of time, but, after continuing through ages, will endure to all eternity.

But to return, "Mary," attentive to the preservation of her virginity, which she had promised to God by a vow,*

2. super *Missus est.*

† Facie rutilans, veste coruscans, incessu mirabilis. Inter Sermones S. Aug. 195. Append. Ed. Ben.—St. Thomas supports likewise this opinion by the authority of St. Chrysostom.

‡ These words make the first part of the *Hail Mary*, which is hence called the *Angelical Salutation.* According to Mabillon, they were first introduced into the office of the church by St. Gregory the Great, but did not become of general use till after the year 1246. The second part of this prayer is the salutation with which St. Elisabeth received the Blessed Virgin into her house, when she came to visit her. The last part, *Holy Mary, &c.*, was added from the great council of Ephesus, an. 431, when the Virgin Mary was declared *Mother of God* with the joyful acclamations of the whole Church against the heresiarch Nestorius.—Mabil. Præf. in Act. sæc. 5. Ben. Cardinal Bona, &c.

* This is certain from the unanimous testimony of the holy Fathers. See Petavius, l. 14. de Incar. c. 4.—The B. Virgin made this vow of virginity before her marriage with St. Joseph, according to St. Austin; but according to St. Thomas, it was after her marriage, and with the mutual consent of St. Joseph, who made a similar vow at the same time.

"said to the angel: how shall this be done, because I know not man;" for she could form to herself no idea of any mode of conception but such as is in the ordinary course of nature, which was incompatible with her vow. Her request therefore to the angel did not proceed from any disbelief, nor from any vain curiosity, but from a commendable prudence, being desirous of knowing how she might comply with the will of God without prejuduce to her former engagement. "And the angel answering said to her," that she had nothing to fear with regard to her virginity; because her conception was to be the work of the Holy Ghost: "The Holy Ghost," said he, "shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy" Fruit "which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* And," as a proof of what I say, "behold thy cousin Elisabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month to her, who is called barren; because nothing shall be impossible to God." Wherefore as he has enabled thy cousin to conceive, notwithstanding her old age and barrenness, so will he render thee fruitful without any detriment to thy virginal integrity. "And Mary," in submission to God's will, without any farther inquiries, expressed her full consent in these humble but powerful words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word:" showing hereby that the mystery of the incarnation was a work that depended on the omnipotency of God, as did the first creation of the world. "And the angel departed from her," full of astonishment at the wonderful mystery which was now accomplished.

Thus did the Blessed Virgin, by her happy assent to the angel's proposal, repair that unhappy assent given by the first woman to the devil's suggestion. For in the moment she expressed her consent, she immediately conceived by the Holy Ghost; who by his almighty power formed a body out of her purest blood, and created an immortal soul for that body; and this body and soul were at the same instant assumed, and united to the Eternal Word, the Son of God, the second Person of the adorable Trinity. Thus was accomplished the great mystery of the incarnation, that mystery of love and mercy which had been promised to mankind 4000 years before, which had been foretold by so many prophets, and desired by so many saints. Thus God began to have an adorer in man, who by being hypostatically united to God the Son, is worthy to give infinite praise and glory; and the world a Mediator who is omnipotent. God was made man, and man, in the Divine Person, was made God, and the Virgin Mary was made Mother of God. St. Peter Chrysologus thus briefly expresses the fruits of this wonderful mystery; "A virgin so receives and contains God in the lodging of her sacred womb, as to procure peace for the earth, glory for heaven, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, and an alliance of men on earth with the blessed in heaven."

It is an ancient tradition, as St.

* It is to be observed that this conversation of the angel with the B. V. Mary turns entirely on the temporal generation of the divine Word, and therefore to form a perfect idea of Jesus Christ, both as to his human and divine nature, we must supply from the first chapter of St. John what is wanting to this discourse. See. Chap. i.

Austin observes, that this mystery was completed on the 25th of March, which is therefore kept a feast of obligation. Both the eastern and western churches celebrate it on this day, and have done so, at least ever since the 5th century. This festival is mentioned by Pope Gelasius I. in 492.—To praise the divine goodness for this incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation, Urban II., in the council of Clermont in 1095, ordered the bell to be rung every day for the triple Angelical Salutation, called Angelus Domini, at morning, noon, and night. This practice of devotion is highly proper, and still obtains in Catholic countries: several Popes have recommended it to the faithful by indulgences, as John XXII., Calixtus III., Paul III., &c. Benedict XIII. augmented these indulgences to those who, at the aforesaid hours, shall devoutly recite this prayer, kneeling.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISITATION. LUKE I.

"Now in those days," soon after the above mentioned embassy, "Mary rising up," without considering her new dignity, or the inconveniences of the journey, "went with speed into the mountainous country, to a city of Juda," which St. Luke does not name, but which was probably Hebron, situated in the hilly country of Juda, and which with the neighbouring villages had been allotted by Josue for the habitation of the priests.* This place was at the distance of about four or five days' journey from Nazareth.

As the feast of the Passover was now approaching, it is most likely that Joseph accompanied the Blessed Virgin as far as Jerusalem; and that, after the feast, he returned home to Nazareth, whilst his spouse continued her journey alone to Hebron. Whether Joseph might decline to attend Mary to Hebron through fear of inconvenience to her relations, as her stay was intended to be of considerable duration, or whether his trade might recall him to Galilee, does not appear from scripture: but it is clear from the suspicions subsequently entertained by him, that he was not present at the first interview between Mary and Elisabeth, we remark on this occasion, the words of Elisabeth, how expressive they are of her great respect and veneration for Mary, whilst the answer of the Blessed Virgin breathes nothing on her part but the most profound humility.

The Blessed Virgin "entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant," animated by the Holy Ghost, by a preternatural motion, "leaped in her womb," showing thereby the early knowledge he had of the presence of his Redeemer;* "and Elisabeth" herself "was" likewise "filled with the Holy Ghost, and," in

* Josue xxi. 9.

* See St. Austin (Ep. ad Dardan) and the ancient Fathers, who agree that the holy infant being cleansed from original sin, anticipated the use of reason, and adored the Messiah before he was yet born.

terms of admiration and thanksgiving, "cried out with a loud voice, and said" to her kinswoman Mary, "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* And whence is this" favour "to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy," giving me hereby to understand, that thou bearest in thy womb the Son of God, whose precursor he is to be. "And blessed art thou that," without any hesitation, "hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.

And Mary said," referring to God alone the whole glory of her exalted privilege: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaid," in choosing me to be the mother of his Son; "for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;† Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me, and holy is his name, and his mercy is from generation unto generation to them that fear him. He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and those of an humble condition he hath exalted. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath favoured his servant Israel, being mindful of his mercy. As he spoke to our forefathers Abraham and his seed for ever," when he formed with them that alliance described in the 17th and 22nd chapters of Genesis. "Now Mary staid with her cousin Elisabeth about three months, and then returned to her own home," whether after or before St. Elisabeth was delivered of St. John is uncertain.*

The above canticle, which is called the Magnificat, is the first recorded in the New Testament, and both in dignity of sentiment and majesty of style, equals if not surpasses all those of the ancient prophets. It is daily recited by the ministers of God's church, as the most perfect model of thanksgiving and praise for the incarnation of the Son of God, and therefore cannot be too often repeated by every grateful Christian. In this canticle the B. Virgin admirably displays the humble sentiments which penetrated her soul even in her highest exaltation. Elisabeth had by her praises extolled her above all others of her sex, but Mary refers the whole glory to God alone; and, in an ecstacy of joy, breaks forth into the praises of her bountiful Saviour, who, notwithstanding her meanness and unworthiness, had made choice of her to co-operate in so great a work as the redemption of man: she confi-

* That our B. Lady had conceived, could only be known to Elisabeth by revelation, it being not yet perceptible to human eyes.

† These words are a prediction of that honour which the Catholic Church in all ages hath shown to the B. Virgin.

* We think it however more probable that she remained with St. Elisabeth till after the birth of St. John, and this is the opinion of Ven. Bede, Maldonatus, Cornelius a Lapide, &c. Tamdiu mansit Virgo, donec præcursoris, propter quam maximè venerat, nativitatem viderat. Bede in c. i. Luc. Indeed to have left her cousin just at the time of her confinement, when she stood particularly in need of her assistance, would apparently have been contrary both to charity and good manners. By assisting on this occasion, our Blessed Lady had an opportunity of learning two things: 1st. to praise and glorify God, who exempted her from all pain in the birth of her son: 2dly, what she was to provide for the swaddling of her infant-God, and in what manner this was to be done. For what time or place could be more opportune for such information, than the birth of St. John and the holy family of Zachary?

dently asserts that on this account her happiness would be proclaimed by all the nations of the earth. With a grateful heart she admires the astonishing wonders which God has wrought in her in this mystery, 1. By uniting man to God in the same person; a work incomprehensible to the human mind: 2. by rendering the conception of his divine Son, both in his and her regard, perfectly holy, and exempt from all that corruption which is incident to the origin of man: and lastly, by displaying his mercy from age to age in favour of those that fear him; the incarnation being a mystery of mercy, which opens to them the gate of heaven, hitherto shut against all mankind. Elisabeth had congratulated the Blessed Virgin on the firmness of her faith as the meritorious cause of her great exaltation; Mary tacitly refuses such congratulation from a sentiment of humility, by reminding her that God had chosen her on this occasion for this greatest of his works, because she was the meanest of his servants; as he had on former occasions displayed the strength of his arm by crushing the proud, and showing favour to the humble, by raising up to the throne those who were in a low station of life, and by filling the poor with good things, whilst the rich he sent empty away. Thus had he likewise acted in her regard, by choosing on this occasion for his mother a poor, unknown maid, preferably to all the illustrious persons, however distinguished by their riches and personal accomplishments. Lastly, Mary had received from her cousin the most hearty thanks for the honour of her visit; but she answers that these are due to God alone, who at length had been mindful of his mercy, and visited his people to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies, by sending his Son according to the promise which he had made to Abraham and his posterity for ever.

Whilst with the Church we praise God for the mercies and wonders which he wrought in this mystery, we ought to apply ourselves to the imitation of the virtues of which Mary sets us a perfect example. From her we ought particularly to learn the merit and excellency of faith, for which she is pronounced blessed by St. Elisabeth. "Blessed art thou that hast believed." Faith, indeed, is the very foundation of salvation, and nothing can supply the want of it. "Without faith" says the apostle, "it is impossible to please God." Now this faith is not a presumptuous confidence of the remission of our sins and of our justification, as some sectarists vainly imagine; for this excludes that humble fear with which we are taught to work out our salvation: but a firm belief of all those things which God has revealed or promised. "Faith," says the apostle, "is the substance (that is the strong foundation) of things to be hoped for; the evidence of things that are not seen." These good things which we hope for; these truths unseen, are made as it were visible to the soul by faith. This faith was always the consolation, the support and strength of the servants of God; it was by faith that Abel offered to God a sacrifice more excellent than that of Cain, and obtained the denomination of Just; it was by faith that Enoch was translated without seeing death; it was by faith

that Abraham obeyed the call of God in leaving his native land, and dwelling in a strange country; it was by faith that Sarah, though barren and advanced in age, received strength from above to conceive and bring forth a son; it was by faith that Moses renounced the honour of being the son of Pharao's daughter, choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God, than to enjoy the vain and sinful pleasures of a court; it was by faith that he celebrated the passover, and made a sprinkling of the blood of the lamb, by which the first-born of the Israelites were saved; it was by faith that the Israelites passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, while the Egyptians were swallowed up in its waves. But if faith was such an abundant source of happiness and glory to the patriarchs and saints of the first alliance, as the apostle thus shows in the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, we shall find in the sequel of this history, that those of the new law who have distinguished themselves by an active and lively faith, have been equally the favourites of heaven. It is by faith that the paralytic obtains of Christ the pardon of his sins and the cure of his malady: it is by faith that the woman who had laboured for twelve years under a cruel disorder is suddenly cured: by faith those who were born blind recover their sight: by faith the Cananean woman obtains the delivery of her daughter from the power of the devil: by faith the centurion's servant is snatched from the jaws of death, and restored to his master: it is by faith, working by charity, that the sinful woman of the Gospel washes the feet of her divine Master, and obtains the pardon of her sins, &c. Hence faith is deservedly styled the treasure of God's children, the mother of good works, and the source of innumerable graces and blessings: it is this which begins and perfects all our meritorious actions; which saves sinners, says St. Austin, which enlightens the blind, which heals the infirm, which supports the faithful, which crowns the martyr, which purifies the virgin, which sanctifies priests, and prepares us for the happy society of the blessed.*

CHAPTER V.

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. LUKE I.

"Now Elisabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son," whose birth was attended with many wonderful circumstances. "And her neighbours and kinsfolks heard that the Lord had showed his great mercy towards her, and they congratulated with her," thus fulfilling in part what the angel had foretold. "And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by his father's name Zachary. And his mother," who knew by revelation what the angel had said to her husband, "answering, said: Not so, but he shall be called John.† And they said to

* See St. Austin, Ser. 10. de Verb. Apost.

† The name of John signifies *grace, pity, mercy;* and was therefore very properly assigned to *him* who was to be the precursor of that extraordinary grace and mercy which God

her: there is no one of thy kindred that is called by this name:" but finding her determined on this point, "they made signs to his father," because he was deaf as well as dumb, to signify "how he would have him called. And demanding a writing-table, he wrote, saying: John is his name. And they all wondered," that the parents, apparently without any previous agreement, should thus both assign the same name, which was totally foreign to their kindred, thence concluding it must be the effect of the divine interposition. "And immediately" Zachary's "mouth was opened, and he recovered his speech, and he spoke blessing God," for his great goodness both to himself and to all mankind, in visiting them in the most tender bowels of his mercy. "And a" prodigious "fear came upon all their neighbours; and all these things were noised abroad over all the mountainous country of Judea;" viz., the apparition of the angel to Zachary, his foretelling to him the birth of the child, the father's incredulity and immediate punishment, and lastly, the instantaneous recovery both of his voice and hearing; an event which had been witnessed by numbers. "And all who heard" these things "laid them up in their hearts, saying: what a child, think you, will this be? for the hand of the Lord hath been with him. And his father Zachary was replenished with the Holy Ghost: and he prophesied, saying:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people: and he hath raised up to us a powerful salvation* in the family of David his servant. As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, who were from the beginning, that he would save us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to show his mercy towards our fathers, and to be mindful of his holy testament," or covenant, made with them respecting the Messias, "according to the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant us; that being delivered from the hand of our" spiritual "enemies" Satan and sin, "we may serve him" with a free, generous love, "without fear, in holiness and justice before him all our days." Then addressing the young child whom God had given him, he said: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" in the minds and hearts of mankind, "to give the knowledge of salvation [i. e., of the Messiah] to his people, for the remission of their sins, through the bowels of the mercy of our God, by which the Rising Light hath visited us from on high: to enlighten them that sit in the darkness" of error and ignorance, "and in the shades of the death" of sin, "to direct our feet in the ways of" true and everlasting "peace."

This canticle of Zachary, which the Church daily recites at Lauds, may be divided into two parts. The first contains a thanksgiving for the inestimable benefit of the incarnation: the second is a prophecy which regards St. John Baptist, who was to prepare the world for that great event. 1. Zachary blesses the Lord, the God of the true

designed for mankind, in the incarnation of his only Son Jesus Christ

* Literally the *horn* of salvation, the horn being a symbol of plenty and strength.

Israel, for having vouchsafed to visit his people, not as formerly by means of his prophets, but by sending his own divine Son, whom he clothed with our human nature. 2. He glorifies him for having redeemed them from the slavery of sin, of the devil, of concupiscence, and of death. 3. For having erected the standard of salvation, and established an everlasting kingdom in the house of his servant David, i. e., in his holy Catholic Church, in spite of all the opposition from the devil, the world, and the flesh. He further specifies the particulars of the infinite blessing thus conferred upon man, which implied our deliverance from all evils, and our enjoyment of all good things. God had by his prophets promised us salvation from all our enemies, both visible and invisible: these are the world and the flesh, the devil, sin, and concupiscence. This promise he now begins to fulfil; that we may serve our God without fear, in holiness and justice all our days. Without fear,—because the law of the gospel is a law of love, and not of servile fear:—in holiness, which consists not in bloody sacrifices, nor in a multiplicity of outward ceremonies as in the old law; but in a worship proceeding from the heart, a pure spiritual worship, such as God, who is a pure spirit, demands of us: in justice,—which consists in a just and upright conduct towards God and our neighbour: not merely in show and words, like that of the Pharisees, but grounded in truth and sincerity; which influences our actions, and causes us to observe all God's precepts, and to perform all our duties in a proper manner. It may be remarked, that Zachary here expresses himself as if speaking of what had already passed: this he does, not only to show, after the manner of the prophets, his certainty of what was to come, but also that the great work of our redemption was now begun by the mystery of the incarnation, and therefore, that the other parts belonging to it would follow, of course, in order to its perfect accomplishment.

"And the child grew, and was strengthened in spirit," as he advanced in age; "and he was in the desert till the day of his manifestation to Israel," when he publicly announced the coming of the Messiah in the manner hereafter related. The immediate reason of his retiring into the desert, was probably the persecution of Herod, at least such is the reason assigned by Peter of Alexandria in the 6th general council.* As the son of Zachary was at that time only about seven months old, his miraculous conception and birth might afford grounds of suspicion to that tyrant, and therefore he might easily have been involved in the bloody decree of extermination; especially as the hills of Judea were not very far distant from Bethlehem. It has been piously believed that he was conducted into the desert by his mother, and there fed by angels after her death.

St. John lived in the desert till the age of 30, and there exhibited a specimen of the eremetical life which was afterwards embraced by so many holy men.† He had neither scrip nor servant, says Origen,‡ nor so much as a cottage to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather: he devoted his whole time to the exercises of holy

* Apud Labbe, t. i. p. 967.

† See the *Wonders of God in the Wilderness*

‡ Hom. 23. in Matt.



Ruth Gleaning.

prayer and contemplation, leading a most austere penitential life,* and disdaining, as St. Jerome says, to behold worldly vanities with eyes which coveted only to see Christ. How loudly does his penitential youth condemn those pretended Christians, whose life is altogether worldly, and who, instead of curbing their inclinations, and keeping their senses in due subjection, study by softness and pleasure, to gratify them on every occasion. We cannot, it is true, retire from the world as the Baptist did, but we may and ought to disengage our hearts from worldly vanities and pleasures, and to imitate in our closet his exercises in the wilderness. By holy retirement and often conversing with heaven, the fascination of this world's enchantments will cease, and we shall see that it has nothing which ought not to be to a christian heart an object of contempt, abhorrence, or dread. The world is made up of vanity and sin: its goods and enjoyments are short-lived and uncertain, and in themselves false and empty; its pains real and grievous; its promises treacherous and deceitful. Sensible that it is filled with snares in every part, and that its pleasures are fraught with deadly poison, we must enter it with a holy fear, converse in it with watchfulness, and continually fortify our souls against the infection of its air by the antidotes of frequent meditation, prayer, and self-denial. This is what St. Francis of Sales* and other spiritualists recommend to Christians, that so they may live in the world without being of it, may use the world as if they used it not, and may possess it without being possessed or captivated by it.

* See a further account of his life in chap. 13.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW. MATT. I.†

ST. MATTHEW intending in his Gospel to represent Jesus Christ as the promised Messias, foretold by the prophets, and prefigured in the Old Testament, begins by ascertaining his dignity from his royal descent and miraculous birth.

"The book of the generation" or of the genealogy of "Jesus Christ," who was avowedly to be "the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judas and his brethren. And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar, and Phares begot Esron, and Esron begot Aram; and Aram begot Abinadab, and Abinadab begot Naason, and Naason begot Salmon: and Salmon begot Booz of Rahab, and Booz begot Obed of Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Salomon of her that had been" the wife "of Urias; and Salomon begot Roboam, and Roboam begot Abias, Abias begot Asa; and Asa begot Josophat, and Josophat begot Joram, and Joram begot Osias," not immediately; for three generations are omitted, as we find 2 Paralip. xxii. There it is said that Joram begot Ochosias, and Ochosias begot Joas, and Joas

* Lib. 4. Ep. 46.

† See that by St. Luke, c. 14.

begot Amasias, and Amasias begot Osias. This omission was not material to St. Matthew's design of showing the Jews that Jesus their Messias was of the family of David; he being equally the son or descendant of David, whether these three generations be omitted or not. "And Osias begot Joatham, and Joatham begot Achaz, and Achaz begot Ezechias; and Ezechias begot Manasses, and Manasses begot Amon, and Amon begot Josias; and Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration to Babylon." This Jechonias is the same who is elsewhere called Eliachim and Joachim, whom Necao king of Egypt placed on the throne of Juda. This prince had a son called Joachim, surnamed by the prophet Jechonias, and he is the person who was the father of Salathiel mentitioned in the following verse. "And after the transmigration to Babylon, Jechonias begot Salathiel, and Salathiel begot Zorobabel," who obtained leave of Darius the king of Persia to return back from Babylon into Judea. "And Zorobabel begot Abiud, and Abiud begot Eliacim, and Eliacim begot Azor; and Azor begot Sadoc, and Sadoc begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud; and Eliud begot Eleazar, and Eleazar begot Mathan, and Mathan begot Jacob; and Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary,* of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ," i. e., the Anointed, so often and so solemnly promised by God to his people. "So all the generations from Abraham to David" are "fourteen generations, and from David to the transmigration of Babylon fourteen generations, and from the transmigration of Babylon to Christ" there "are" also "fourteen generations." The first class of fourteen begins with Abraham, and ends with David. The second class begins with Salomon and ends with Jechonias. The third class is supposed to begin with Salathiel, and to end, says St. Jerome, with our Saviour Christ. But thus we shall only find in the third class thirteen generations, and in all only forty-one instead of forty-two persons. Not to mention other interpretations, the conjecture of St. Epiphanius seems the most probable, that we are to understand as mentioned above two Jechoniases, the father and son, who had the same name; so that the true reading should be, "Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren, and Jechonias begot Jechonias, and Jechonias begot Salathiel." Thus Jechonias named in the 12th verse is not the same, but the son of him that was named in the 11th verse; and from Jechonias the son begins the third class, and so Christ will be the last or fourteenth person in that last series or class.

There are several difficulties in reconciling this genealogy in St. Matthew with that which St. Luke gives chap iii.; but without insisting on all the particulars, suffice it to say that no one can reasonably doubt but that both the Evangelists copied from the genealogical tables, as they were then extant and carefully preserved by the Jews, and especially by those families

* *Husband* of Mary. So he is again called verse 19. But in the 18th verse we read: When Mary his Mother *was espoused* to Joseph. These different expressions of being *husband* and *espoused* have occasioned different interpretations, some thinking that St. Joseph and the B. Virgin were truly married at the time of Christ's conception, others that they were only *espoused* or engaged by a promise to marry afterwards. The former seems to be better supported by the sacred text, and is more generally received.

that were of the tribe of Juda and of the family of David. For if the Evangelists had either falsified, or made any mistake as to these genealogies, the Jews would undoubtedly have objected this against the Gospels, which they never did. The reason of this difference was at that time public, and known to every one, and so was not mentioned. It seems most probable that St. Matthew gives the natural, and St. Luke the legal line of St. Joseph, the term used by the former being genuit, (begot,) which is more expressive of the natural genealogy, than that made use of by St. Luke.*

St. Chrysostom takes notice of the astonishing mercy and humility of our divine Redeemer, in this single circumstance of his not disdaining, for the sake of sinners, to choose a pedigree in which are named several notorious characters. So much did he humble himself to satisfy for us and to cure our vanity and pride! Let us learn of him on this occasion, to despise the vain parade of worldlings, who are so fond of displaying the long though often imaginary genealogy of their families; and who are ever celebrating the glorious achievements of their ancestors, whilst many of them, and perhaps even the most renowned, may have long since augmented the number of the damned. Instead of glorying in the names of such as are accursed by God, let us rather rejoice in being the children of our heavenly Father by a new birth, and the brothers of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners.

CHAPTER VII.

JOSEPH IS ADMONISHED, BY AN ANGEL, OF THE CONCEPTION OF CHRIST. MATT. I.

THE Blessed Virgin returned home to Nazareth after a stay of about three months with her cousin Elisabeth in the hilly country of Judea. Her pregnancy now became very perceptible to St. Joseph. But St. Matthew not having recorded each circumstance which attended the conception of Jesus Christ, takes care to guard the minds of his readers against all false ideas they might otherwise form concerning it; and after remarking that Mary was become pregnant before she and her husband Joseph came together, adds, that this was effected by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

"Now the generation of Christ was thus. When Mary his mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child" by the operation "of the Holy Ghost," without ceasing to be a virgin. "And Joseph her husband," knowing her strict virtue, was surprised at this her pregnancy, but "being a just man, and not willing to expose her to public shame," by denouncing her to the judges as an adulteress, or giving her a bill of divorce, "he had a mind to dismiss her privately," committing the whole cause to God. Let us learn from hence to be ever tender in all that regards the reputation of our neighbour, and never to entertain any

* For the origin of this double genealogy amongst the Jews, see Deut. xxv. 5, 6.

injurious thoughts or suspicions to his prejudice. We offend in this respect only because we are void of that true charity and simplicity whereof St. Joseph here sets us so eminent an example. "But whilst he was thinking of these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is" the work "of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus (which means a Saviour;) for he shall save his people from their sins. And all this was done that it might be fulfilled what the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin* shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son: and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us," because he shall be both God and man. "And Joseph rising up from sleep did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife. And he knew her not, till she brought forth her first born," without any detriment to her virginity, "and called his name Jesus."

St. Jerome assures us, that St. Joseph always preserved his virgin chastity; and it is of faith that nothing contrary thereto ever took place with his chaste spouse the Blessed Virgin Mary.† He was given her by heaven to be the protector of her chastity, to secure her from calumnies in the birth of the Son of God, and to assist her in his education, and in her journeys, fatigues, and persecutions. We cannot sufficiently admire their silence on this occasion. Mary, although conscious of the anxiety which preyed upon her husband's mind, yet ventured not to explain to him the mystery of her pregnancy. She deemed herself not warranted to attribute to her own person so distinguishing and extraordinary a mark of the divine favour, as was that of having conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The holy Joseph was unwilling on his part to hint to her the cause of his anxiety, lest the mention of it might occasion trouble and uneasiness to her delicate mind. But God, by thus recording the disposition of St. Joseph, and the strict silence observed by both parties, has furnished us with an uncontrovertible proof of the spotless purity of the Blessed Virgin, and of the divine origin of her Son. For

* *Behold a virgin, &c.*, in Hebrew *alma*, which signifies a *virgin*. Let the Jews, says St. Jerome, show me any place in which the Hebrew word *alma* is applied to any one that is not a virgin, and I will own my ignorance. Besides, this appears from the very circumstances of the text: for there a *sign* or miracle is promised to Achaz; and what miracle would it be for a young woman to have a child, when she ceased to be a virgin?

† I know indeed that the heretic Helvidius of old, and others since, have started some objections against this doctrine of the Catholic Church: viz. 1. That by the Gospel saying that St. Joseph *knew her not till* she had brought forth *her first born son*, is implied that he knew her afterwards. 2. That Christ would not be called the *first born*, unless others had been born of his mother afterwards. 3. That we read in the Gospel of Christ's *brethren;* therefore Christ must have had brothers, and his mother other sons after him. But these trifling objections have been long ago refuted by St. Jerome. In regard to the first, this learned Doctor brings examples to show that the word *until* is often used to signify, that such a thing happened not till such a time; when yet it would be very false and foolish to pretend, that it happened afterwards. For example, Christ said to his disciples: *Behold I am with you* UNTIL *the end of the world*, it would be foolish to say that Christ would not be with them afterwards, and for all eternity. God saith to his divine Son: *Sit on my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool;* but will he sit no longer, after his enemies are subdued?—To the second St. Jerome shows again, by examples from scripture, that every one that is first brought forth is called the *first born*, or the *first begotten*, without any reference to other children afterwards: thus the *first born* are ordered to be redeemed in the law. Thus an angel is said to have killed all the *first begotten* in Egypt, where doubtless many of them were the *only begotten*.—Finally, as to the third trifling argument of Helvidius, it is evident that, in the style of the scriptures, they that were no more than cousins, were called brothers and sisters.

who will not give credit to the testimony of a husband concerning the fidelity of his spouse, when after doubting it, and being on the point of separating from her, he is, on a sudden, perfectly convinced of the purity of her conduct, and by the most affectionate behaviour evinces that all his doubts are entirely removed?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST.—HIS CIRCUMCISION. LUKE II.

In the detail of the birth of Jesus given us by St. Luke, we may consider, 1. The preparations preceding it: 2. The humiliating circumstances attending it: 3. The wonders which followed it.

"Now it came to pass in those days, that an edict came out from" the emperor Octavius, here denominated "Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world," i. e., the whole Roman empire, "should be enrolled," with the view of ascertaining its riches and strength. "This first* enrolment was made by Cyrinus," otherwise Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, afterwards "president of Syria." But though on the part of the emperor this regulation originated from vain and political views, on the part of God it proceeded from an overruling order of his divine providence, that by this most authentic public act, it might be manifest to the whole world, that Christ was descended from the house of David and tribe of Juda. "For all went to be enrolled, every one to his own city," from whence he originally sprung. "And Joseph also went up out of Galilee from the city of Nazareth† into Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem,* because he was of the family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, now big with child. And it came to pass, when they were there, her time of being delivered was accomplished; and she brought forth her first" and only "born son" Jesus Christ; and this she did without the pains of delivery, remaining both in and after his conception and birth a pure virgin. She stood in need of no assistance usual to those of her sex on such occasions; she herself "wrapped him up in swaddling clothes," such as her poverty had allowed her to prepare; "and," for want of a cradle, "laid him in a manger" upon straw. The stable to which they had resorted for shelter, was a cave made on the side of a rock, and according to St. Jerome, lay on the south side of the city.† It

* This is called the *first* register, because about ten years afterwards this same Quirinus caused a second to be made, when, after the expulsion and banishment of Archelaus, Judea was made a Roman province.

† Situated about ninety miles north of Jerusalem.

* Bethlehem was a small town situated on the declivity of a hill in the tribe of Juda, about six or seven miles to the south-west of Jerusalem. The prophet Micheas, chap. ii. 2. had foretold that Bethlehem (called by the Jebusites, who first built it, Ephrata) should be ennobled by the birth of Christ. For a description of this place, see Adrichomius, and principally Quaregimus.—Considering that the B. Virgin was now big with child, we might justly wonder how she could undertake so long a journey on foot (for we hear of no other resource that she possessed) were it not presumable, that she carried without the sense of any load or uneasiness, him whom she had conceived without the loss of her virginity.

† Whether this cave was situated in the town, or only in the suburbs, is a question among the learned. Alban Butler, who follows Serry, says that St. Justin and Eusebius

is a common tradition, that an ox and an ass were in it at that time. This circumstance is not mentioned in holy scripture, but is supported by the authority of St. Jerome, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and Prudentius, produced by Baronius. Among the moderns this opinion is adopted by Graveson, Honoré of St. Mary, Sandinus, Quaresimus, Benedict XIV. and others.* Joseph and Mary were reduced to the necessity of taking up with this poor stable, "because there was no room for them in the inn," either on account of the great concourse of people there assembled, or by reason of their extreme poverty, which might prejudice the innkeepers against them. Certain it is, that our Blessed Redeemer chose willingly to be born in this manner; and this he did in order to give us an example of humility, poverty, and self-denial, in opposition to that triple concupiscence which reigns in the world, and which is the source of all our spiritual maladies. For "all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."—By the concupiscence of the flesh is meant the inordinate inclination which we have of gratifying the senses. Christ, to encourage us to renounce this love of sensual pleasures, and to satisfy his justice by our own sufferings, begins to suffer as soon as he begins to live. At his very birth he exposes his delicate body to the inclemency of the severest season of the year, to the hard boards of the manger, and to a privation of the most ordinary conveniences and necessaries of life.—By the concupiscence of the eyes is understood the love of riches, the second root of the disorders which reign in the world, and the foundation of its false maxims. This our Saviour teaches us to overcome by a love of poverty, which he here consecrates in his divine person, says St. Bernard. Riches, though good in the designs of Providence, and affording means of relieving the distressed, are yet dangerous, and by the sin of our first parent, infected with a mortal poison. Hence the Holy Ghost declares: "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent;" for the desire of them produces generally a kind of spiritual fever which lays waste the soul, and destroys the relish of heavenly goods. The woes, however, which the Gospel pronounces against the rich, do not fall on such as are merely possessed of

were of opinion that Christ was born *without* the city; but this is a mistake, as Sandinus shows by referring to the originals. (Vid. Hist. Familiæ Sacræ, c. i.) St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, Origen, and even St. Justin, favour the opinion that Christ was born *in* Bethlehem; and hence Casaubon, (Exer. 2. in Bar. p. 143.) Krausen, (Diss. in Nov. Test.) Maldonatus, Drexelius, Sandinus, Petavius, &c. conclude that this cave was situated within the town of Bethlehem. However, the contrary assertion is maintained by Baronius, Nat. Alexander, Tillemont, Calmet, Honoré of St. Mary, and Ben. XIV.—The cave on the side of a rock is about 40 feet deep and 12 wide, growing narrow towards the roof. To this day there are three convents of Latins, Greeks, and Armenians, all contiguous, each having their several doors opening into the chapel of the holy manger. The holy manger itself, in which Christ was laid at his birth, is of wood, and is now kept in a subterraneous chapel in the church of St. Mary Major at Rome, whither it was brought with some stones cut out of the rock in the cave, not in the year 352, as some say, but in the 7th century, as Benedict XIV. proves. (Lib. 4. de Canonisa, part. 2.) It resembles an ordinary manger, is enclosed in a case of massy silver, and in it lies an image of a little child, also of silver. On Christmas-day, the holy crib is taken out of the case and exposed; it is well known how much it excited the devotion of St. Jerome, St. Paula and others, when at Bethlehem. (See St. Jer. Ep. 108. ad Enstoch. § 10.)

* Tillemont. (n. 5.) Baillet, and some others, think the opinion, that an ox or an ass was in the stable, arose from Isaiah i. 3., and Habacuc iii. 2. (which latter passage is according to the LXX. "in the midst of beasts thou shalt be made known,") both which passages the Fathers expound metaphorically. But their allegorical explanation does not exclude the truth of historical tradition, but is rather supported by it. How often do the Fathers expound metaphorically the actions of Christ and the historical facts mentioned in the Gospel.

riches, but on those who are inordinately attached to them, and who make them the incentives and instruments of their passions and lusts. Men may be poor in spirit in the midst of riches, in which we have many examples in the annals of the church; but this is an extraordinary grace, and, therefore, Christ recommends poverty by his own choice as a more secure state, and better adapted to the practice of the most perfect virtues. Whilst Christ therefore sets up the standard of poverty, let none of his followers boast of his riches; whilst our Lord and God thus willingly embraces the lowest state of indigence, let none of his disciples blush at its humiliations, or by murmuring and impatience deprive himself of those advantages which poverty offers, of improving in virtue, and securing the riches of the kingdom of heaven.

Pride being the third principal source of our disorders, the Son of God came to give us an example of humility. This was his favourite virtue which he displayed on all occasisions, but particularly at the crib at Bethlehem. Who is not moved at this astonishing humiliation of the Deity, who here divests himself of all his glory, to expiate our pride? While we behold a God thus poor, and humbled below the meanest of his creatures, can we, sinners as we are, entertain thoughts of pride, vain glory, and ambition? What is it, says St. Austin, that can cure our pride, if it be not cured by this wonderful abasement of the Son of God?

God was pleased that his Son, though born on earth with so much secrecy, and in a state of the most astonishing humiliation, should yet be acknowledged by men, and receive the first fruits of their homage and devotion upon his appearance among them. But who are they that are favoured with the honour of this heavenly call? The great ones of the world, and renowned sages of the Jews and Gentiles, the princes who, by their riches, power, and pomp, seemed raised above the level of their fellow-creatures, are passed over on this occasion. They are chosen, whose character, by their very station, is simplicity and humility, and whose obscurity, poverty, and solitude, removed them from the principal dangers of worldly pride, and were most agreeable to that love and spirit of retiredness, penance, and humility, which Christ came to recommend to his followers. These happy persons were certain shepnerds who "were in the same country,* watching and keeping the night watches over their flock" against robbers and wolves. "And behold," whilst the sensual and the proud were reposing on beds of down; or employed in pursuits of voluptuousness, vanity, and ambition, "an angel of the Lord stood by" these humble, poor men, "and the brightness of God shone round about them,† and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." He is born, "and this shall be a sign unto you: You shall

* Near the tower Ader, which is situated between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and near which Jacob fed his flocks. Bede makes their number to have been three, whilst others think differently.

† As a token of the great light which was now risen to dispel the shade of death.

find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." This is that child who is the Son of David, and the Messias,* so long expected by your fathers, who is to reign over you, and to deliver you from all your enemies. We may observe how the angel pointed out to the sheperds by what marks they might know Jesus from all others exactly specifying both the place wherein they would find him and the manner of his being lodged; and this was a caution against the doubts they might otherwise have entertained on finding him in so poor and humiliating a situation. What, therefore, to their natural reasoning might have appeared sufficient to make them conclude that he was not Christ, or the Messiah, now convinces them of his being such, because their faith and their hearts are enlightened from above. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God" for this transcendent display of his goodness to sinful man, "and saying: Glory to God" who dwelleth "in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will;† i. e., glory and praise are given to God in the highest heavens by all the celestial host, to whom all those upon earth join their echoes of praise and glory. The subject of this praise and glory is, that God has blessed the earth with a complete and everlasting peace, in sending his only Son to be born amongst us, in order to effect our pardon and reconciliation, by that eternal alliance which he contracted with our human nature. "And it came to pass after the angels departed from them into heaven," singing the praises of God, and thereby establishing the reality and credibility of the embassy they were charged with, "the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing" him in this low state, "they understood the word which was spoken to them of this child," and published it abroad. "And all that heard wondered: and at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But," amidst these occurrences, "Mary" was silent and "kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." In effect, the great things which God works in his servants naturally produce in them silence, astonishment, and something divine, which excludes all expression: and so, in the present instance, Mary, unable to express what she inwardly felt in her heart, is fixed in silent thought on her divine Son, catching attentively the words that were spoken of him, and laying them up carefully in her heart. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard, and seen, as it was told unto them."

* The word Messiah is derived from the Hebrew Mashac *to anoint*, and is the same as *Christos* the *Anointed* in Greek. It is a name sometimes given to the kings and high-priests of the Hebrews, who were anointed with oil. 1 Kings xi. 5, &c. But by way of eminence it belonged to the sovereign spiritual Deliverer and Saviour of mankind, so often promised by God to his people. Not that Christ received any outward sensible unction; and the unction which the prophets and apostles speak of in his regard, is the spiritual and internal unction of grace and of the Holy Ghost, of which the outward unction was only a figure and symbol.

† The present Greek text, as likewise the Codex Vaticanus, reads this passage, *good will to men*, so as to make it a third member of the sentence, and to signify peace or pardon to the earth, and divine favour aud grace to men. However, several of the best Greek copies, such as the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Beza, are conformable to the Latin Vulgate, and the sense is nearly the same.

We may justly admire their conduct on this occasion, which shows their ready submission, their confidence in God, their zeal, their faith and gratitude, in the most amiable light. 1. They showed their prompt obedience, by immediately following the voice which called them to the crib of Jesus; for without delay they repaired to Bethlehem, there to witness the wonders which had been described to them. 2. They testified their confidence in God's providence, by leaving their flocks under his care and protection during their absence, and in so dangerous a time as the darkest part of the night. 3. By making all possible haste, they showed their great zeal and devotion: and their faith was equally manifested, both by assenting to whatever the angel told them, however contrary to all human appearance and to the evidence of sense, as well as by making an outward profession of this belief, and by imparting to all their neighbours the knowledge of this divine Infant, as the Lord and promised Messias. Lastly, their gratitude appears by their praising and blessing God for allowing them to be the witnesses of such wonders. Let Christians, in contemplating this mystery, enter into the same sentiments; let them exult with holy joy in God their Redeemer, and pay to him the just homages of their adoration, praise, and love.

"And after eight days were accomplished that the child was to be circumcised, his name was called JESUS,* as he was named by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb" of his mother.

Circumcision was a sacrament of the old law, and the first legal observance required by Almighty God of his chosen people the Jews; and this on two several accounts: 1. As a distinguishing mark between them and the rest of mankind. 2. As a seal to the covenant made between God and their patriarch Abraham, whereby it was stipulated on God's part, to bless Abraham and his posterity; whilst, on their part, it implied a holy engagement to be His people by a strict conformity to his laws. It was therefore a sacrament of initiation in the service of God, and a promise and engagement to believe and act, as he had revealed and described.

This law of circumcision continued in force till the death of Christ, and he himself was pleased to submit to it, though without any obligation on his part. This he did for the following

* We shall here give a collection of the chief names and titles given to Jesus Christ. *Advocate*, 1 John ii. 1. *Angel of the Covenant*, Mal. iii. 1. *Anointed* or *Christ*, John i. 41. *Apostle*, Heb. iii. 1. *The Beginning of the Creation of God*, Apoc. iii. 14. *Begotten of the Father*, John i. 14. *Beloved Son*, Eph. i. 6. *Bishop*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. *Blessed and Mighty*, 1 Tim. vi. 15. *Brightness of the Father's Glory*, Heb. i. 3. *Chosen Servant*, Matt. xii. 18. *Consolation of Israel*, Luke ii. 5. *Corner Stone*, Eph. ii. 20. *Counsellor*, Isa. ix. 6. *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*, Matt. i. 29. *Faithful Witness*, the *First begotten of the Dead*, the *Prince of the kings of the earth*, Apoc. i. 5. *First-born*, Col. i. 15. *The First-fruits of them that sleep*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. *First and Last*, Rev. ii. 8. *God* Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 1; 1 John v. 20; &c. *The Head of all principality*, Col. ii. 10. *Heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2. *High Priest*, Heb. iii. 1. *Holy One of God*, Mark i. 24. *Jehovah*, Exod. vi. 3. *Jesus*, Matt. i. 21. *King*, Matt. xxi. 5, &c. *Lamb of God*, John i. 29. *The last Adam*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. *Light of the world*, John ix. 5. *Life*, John xiv. 6. *Lion of the tribe of Juda*, Apoc. v. 5. *Man*, Acts xvii. 31, &c. *Mediator*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *Messiah*, John i. 41. *Melchisedech*, Heb. vii. 1. *Passover*, 1 Cor. v. 7. *Prophet*, Luke xxii. 19. *Propitiation*, 1 John ii. 2. *Prince of Peace*, Isa. ix. 6. *Power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 14. *Ransom*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. *Redeemer*, Isa. lix. 20. *Rock*, 1 Cor. x. 4. *Root of David*, Apoc. xxii. 16. *Son of God*, John i. 34. *Son of the Most High*, Luke i. 31. *Son of Man*, John iii. 13. *Spouse*. *Son of Righteousness*, Matt. iv. 3. *Saviour*, Luke ii. 11. *Shepherd*, John x. 11. *Truth*, John xiv. 6. *Vine*, John xv. 1. *Way*, John xiv. 6. *Wonderful*, Isa. ix. 6. *Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 14. *Word of God*, Apoc. xix. 13. *Word with God*, John i. 1. *Judge*.

reasons: 1. To put an end in an honourable manner to a divine though temporary institution; for it became him, who came to teach mankind obedience to the laws of God, to fulfil all justice, and therefore to be made under the law, i. e., to be circumcised, that he might redeem them that were under the law, by freeing them from the servitude of it; and that those who were in the condition of servants before, might be set at liberty, and receive the adoption of sons in baptism, which, by Christ's institution, succeeded to circumcision. 2. To prove the reality of his human body; which, however evident from this and so many other actions and sufferings of his life, was denied by several ancient heretics.* 3. To prove himself not only the Son of man, but of that man in particular of whose seed the Messiah was promised; thus precluding any future objection that might be raised by the Jews against his divine mission in quality of Messiah, under the pretence of his being an alien. In thus qualifying himself for free conversation with his countrymen, for their own spiritual advantage, he sets us all a pattern of undergoing voluntarily several hardships and restraints, which though not necessary on our own account, may be of great use to promote the good of others. 4. Christ here gives us an early pledge of his love for us, of his compassion for our miseries, and of his utter detestation of sin. With infinite zeal for his Father's honour, and charity for us sinners, with infinite patience and the most profound humility, he now offered himself most cheerfully to his Father, to undergo whatever he was pleased to enjoin him. 5. By this ceremony he humbled himself to satisfy for our pride, and to teach us the sincere spirit of humility. What greater humiliation can be imagined, than for him, who is the eternal Son of God, in all things equal to his Father, to conceal these glorious titles under the appearance of a sinner? What a subject of confusion to us, who being abominable criminals, are ashamed to pass for what we are, and desire to appear and be esteemed what we are not! Shall we not learn from this example of Christ to love humiliations, especially as we cannot but acknowledge that we deserve every reproach and all manner of contempt from creatures? 6. By beginning the great work of our salvation in the manner he was one day to finish it; suffering in his own person the punishment of sin, to deliver us from both sin and its punishment, he confounds the impenitence of those who will suffer nothing for their own sins; and he inculcates the necessity of a spiritual circumcision, whereof the external was but the type and figure, as the apostle puts us in mind, Rom. ii. 29.

It is manifest beyond all contradiction, from several texts of the Old Testament,* that the Jews ought not to have rested in the external act alone, but should have aspired from the letter to the spirit, from the carnal to a spiritual circumcision. These texts, at the same time that they set forth its necessity, describe it as consisting in a readiness and willing disposition to conform to the will of God, and submit to it, wher known, in every particular. They consequently require a retrench-

* Manichæus, Apollinarius, Valentinus, &c.

* Deut. x. 16. chap. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4.

ment of all inordinate and superfluous desires of the soul, the keeping a strict guard and government over ourselves, a total abstinence from criminal, and a prudent reserve even in the lawful gratification of sense and appetite. If these instances of spiritual circumcision were required of those under the old law, how much more will they be required of us in the new law, in order to be spiritual children of this faithful Abraham, and to share in that redemption which Christ began to purchase for us at the expense of his blood? We must imitate therefore our Lord's circumcision, by circumcising or cutting off whatever inordinate or superfluous desires reign in our hearts; and by renouncing whatever holds us wedded to our senses, or to the world. We must circumcise not only the inward, but also the outward man in our exterior senses, which too often prove occasions of offending God. Hence we must restrain our eyes from dangerous objects; our ears from hearkening to immodest discourses and detraction; our taste from intemperance and excess; our tongue from all lying, swearing, cursing, or any unbecoming language; from all flattery and dissimulation, from speaking ill of others, and from whatever may serve to sow discord and contention. In a word, we must circumcise and cut off everything that is contrary to the law of God, by putting off the old man and putting on the new. Lastly, we should cut off some of our superfluities as to the things of this world, by giving them to the poor and those who are in want. If we cannot find in our hearts to part with something out of our abundance, to assist those who are in necessity, how shall we be willing to shed our blood or lose our lives for Christ? and yet this we must do, if ever called to the trial, under pain of being disowned and rejected by him. Let us therefore now circumcise ourselves by works of penance, mortification, and self-denial. by alms-deeds and charity to the poor. In doing this, we shall truly honour Jesus Christ in his circumcision, and shall experience him to be truly the Saviour of our souls.

On the day our Lord was circumcised,* he received the adorable name of Jesus, a name the most glorious and most expressive of his saving power; for he came "to save his people from their sins." This he effected by the greatest sufferings and humiliations, having "humbled himself," as St. Paul says, "not only unto death, but even to the death of the cross; for which cause God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:" agreeably to what Christ says of himself, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

The devotion towards this sacred name of Jesus began with the Church itself. This saving name ought never to be pronounced but with respect. From generation to generation parents

* The Jews generally named their children on the day of their circumcision; but this was not of precept, as appears from several instances of children named on the day of their birth, which could not be that of their circumcision, as an express law required the interval of eight days; for the child was presumed too weak to undergo the operation sooner, without danger of its life.—It seems likewise to have been the practice among the Jews for children to be circumcised at home, nor was a priest the necessary or ordinary minister, but the father or mother, or any other person could perform the ceremony. (Gen. xvii., Acts vii., I Mac. i.) Whence it is a vulgar error of painters to represent Christ circumcised by a priest in the temple; for it was done in the stable at Bethlehem, and probably by St. Joseph, according to St. Ephrem, and with a sharp stone, according to St. Aug. See Ben. XIV. *in Festis*, and Sandinus.

have taught their children to confide in this holy name, and to repeat it with a lively faith, mixed with love, that they may obtain the blessing of salvation promised by St. Paul to those who shall duly call upon it. For in calling upon Jesus, our Saviour God, we publicly declare, that through him alone, and not from ourselves, the grace of salvation comes. The name was brought from heaven by an angel, as we have seen above; the Father himself gave it to the divine Infant, even before he was conceived in the Virgin's womb. It therefore is our duty not to rob him of the glory which he has thus received: we should be careful not to hinder him from being a Saviour to us: with profound humility let us lay open the wounds of our souls before him, that the merits of his life and death may heal and save us.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EPIPHANY, OR ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN.* MATT II.

SCARCE had the birth of Jesus been announced to the Jews by an angel, when the unusual appearance of a star manifested it also to the Gentiles. The shepherds, as the first fruits of the Jews, prefigured the indifference of that people, by the little noise they made on that occasion; whilst the wise men, who were the first fruits of the Gentiles, showed forth the happy effects which the coming of Christ would produce in the pagan world. These princes came with pomp and splendour; they roused Jerusalem, and alarmed king Herod, because it was more particularly the conversion of the Gentiles which was to make a noise in in the world, and to stir up against the Church both the fury of the people and the policy of the Roman emperors.

St. Matthew, who has omitted to detail the circumstances attending the birth of Jesus Christ, has recorded at length this great event of the adoration paid to him by the wise men, which he places under the reign of Herod, who was doubly a stranger to the Jewish people, being a Philistine by birth, and an Idumean by origin. On this occasion we may observe, 1. The courage of the wise men: 2. Their lively faith and devotion: 3. Their princely magnificence: 4. Their grateful obedience to the admonition of heaven.

These magi, who are generally called the three kings,† though the scripture is silent as to their quality and number, were probably from Aram or Mesopotamia, or perhaps from Arabia Felix,‡ all situated to the east of Jerusalem; and as they were much given to astrology, Almighty God, by a wonderful condescension, was pleased to instruct them by a new star, probably by an extraordinary splendour and

* There are four different opinions as to the time of this event. St. Austin thinks that the magi or wise men came to Jerusalem before the purification; and this seems likewise to be the sentiment of the Church, which celebrates this great mystery on the 12th day after the birth of our Saviour. This opinion is confirmed by the text of St. Matthew: "When Jesus was born, behold there came wise men," &c. See likewise St. Thomas, Sandinus, &c.

† They are called by some Melchior, Gaspar, Balthasar: but these names, as Bollandus shows, are not to be found in any author, either Greek or Latin, before the 12th century

‡ According to St. Justin and Tertullian.

brightness. It could not have been a real star, i. e., one of the fixed, the least or nearest of which is, for distance, too remote, and for bulk, too enormous to point out any particular house or city like Bethlehem, as St. Chrysostom well observes, who supposes it to have been an angel assuming that form. It appears to have been a miraculous shining meteor resembling a star, but placed in the lower region of our atmosphere; its motion, contrary to the ordinary course of the stars, performing the part of a guide to these travellers, (as did the pillar of fire to the Israelites in the desert,) accommodating itself to their necessities, disappearing or returning as they could best dispense with its guidance.*

In the very night on which Jesus was born, these magi, we may imagine, were busied, perhaps separately, in viewing the heavens, when suddenly they perceived this extraordinary phenomenon appearing upon the confines of Judea. Recalling to mind the prophecy of Baalam, a celebrated prophet of those parts, they judged that so singular an appearance must be the token of the birth of that king who, coming out of Judea, was to conquer all the adjoining countries. The prophecy was as follows: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel, and shall strike the chiefs of Moab, and shall waste all the children of Seth. And he shall possess Idumea: the inheritance of Seir shall come to their enemies."

These countries were on the confines of Arabia, and as the magi had always understood this prophecy in a literal sense, (which however more properly signified the spiritual conquests of the Messias, and the conversion of all nations to the faith,) hence they reasonably concluded that they ought to make haste to pay their homage to a king, to whom was promised from above the empire of the earth, hoping thus to secure his alliance and friendship. But God afterwards enlightened their minds concerning the true sense of the above-mentioned prophecy. Their view however seeming sufficiently clear, and such as might justly be supposed that of independent princes on a similar occasion, we are led to consider the ancient opinion of their exalted rank as far from being ill grounded. Be that as it may, by communicating to each other their respective discoveries, they agreed to set out together on their journey into Judea, which they possibly might reach upon camels in the space of five or six days.*

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem," a town of Juda,† "in the days of king Herod" the Great,‡ "behold

* See St. Thomas, P. 3. Q. 36, &c.

* See a full account of the magi in Prideaux's Connection, P. 1. B. 4.

† To distinguish it from another Bethlehem, situated in the tribe of Zabulon.

‡ As in the life of Christ there is frequent mention of the Herods, it may not be improper to give some account of them. Herod the Great was the son of Antipater, an Idumean, and reigned in Judea during 37 years. In this reign both John the Baptist and Christ our Lord were born: by his orders the Innocents were slain, Matt. ii. 1, 13, 16; Luke i. 5. Herod the Great divided his dominions, at his death, amongst his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip; his fourth son Herod Philip by Mariamne having no share of territory. Archelaus, the eldest, was ethnarch or prince of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. It was under him that Christ returned from Egypt, Matt. ii. 22. Archelaus being banished by Augustus to Vienne in Gaul, in the 12th year of Christ, his territory was annexed to the province of Syria, and put under the direction of Roman governors. The first of these was Coponius, sent by Augustus; the fifth was Pontius Pilate, sent by Tiberius. Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, (Luke iii. 1.) who married Herodias the wife of his brother Philip, and put John the Baptist to death, Matt. xiv. 4, 10. He had Chusa for his steward or procurator, (Luke xiv. 4, 10.) laid snares for Christ, and was called by him the fox, Luke xiii. 31, 32. He mocked and derided Christ, (Luke xxiii. 11.) and conspired with Pilate

there came" these "wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east," which announced his birth, "and are come to adore him. And king Herod," who had usurped the kingdom, and was apprehensive of being deposed, "hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet" Micheas: "And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least of the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the Captain, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them. And sending them to Bethlehem, said: Go, and diligently inquire after the child; and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him." This bore the appearance of an invitation to return again to Jerusalem, which at the moment they probably meant to accept. It was undoubtedly owing to the Divine providence, that this artful prince did not accompany the wise men, and no less so, that he omitted sending some confidential messenger in their company. The reason of this his short-sighted policy might perhaps be his apprehension, lest the success of the search might be defeated, were he to attend it in person, as he was conscious of the hatred and awe which the people bore towards him; and the very report of his journey into those parts, might have been the occasion of the Infant's being removed into some safer situation. The wise men "having heard the king, went their way, and behold the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came, and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house" pointed out to them by this miraculous guide, "they found the child, with Mary his Mother: and falling down they adored him," not only as a man of supereminent dignity, but also as their God. This is clearly taught by St. Irenæus,* Origen,† St. Chrysostom,‡ &c. Their faith was no wise shaken at the sight of his poverty and humble appearance; for they had been taught from above to consider in a spiritual and not in an earthly light the quality of this new-born King, and that of the kingdom which he was come to establish.§ So far therefore from being shocked at his unkingly appearance, their faith rises and gathers strength on the sight of obstacles which, humanly speaking, should extinguish it. It captivates their understanding

against his disciples, Acts iv. 27. Manahen had his education with this Herod, and is called foster-brother to him, Acts xiii. 1.—Philip the tetrarch of Iturea, and of the country of Trachonitidis, (Luke iii. 1.) was, according to some, the husband of Herodias. See chap. xiii. in the note.

Herod the Great's grandchildren by his son Aristobulus, whom he had put to death, were Herod king of Chalcis, Agrippa senior, and Herodias. Agrippa, who was likewise called Herod, put to death James the Great, the brother of John, cast Peter the prince of the apostles into prison, and being struck by an angel, *expired eaten up by worms*, Acts xii. 2, 4, 23. His son was Agrippa the Younger, before whom St. Paul pleaded his cause in chains. Josephus mentions, that in the space of 100 years the whole race of Herod was extinct. L b. 18. Antiq. Judaic. c 3.

* Lib. 3. adversus Hereses, c. 10.

† Lib. 1. contra Celsum, 360.

‡ Hom. 8. in Matt.

§ It is the more general opinion that they found the divine Infant in the same stable where he was born, and not in a more commodious dwelling, as some pretend.

it penetrates these veils of poverty, infancy, weakness and abjection; it casts them on their faces as unworthy to look up to this Star, this God of Jacob: they confess him, under this disguise, to be the only and eternal God: they own the excess of his goodness in becoming man, and the excess of human misery, which required for its relief so great a humiliation of the Lord of glory. St. Leo thus extols their faith and devotion: "When a star had conducted them to adore Jesus, they did not find him expelling devils, or raising the dead, or restoring sight to the blind, or speech to the dumb, or employed in any divine actions; but a silent babe, under the care of a solicitous mother, giving no sign of power, but exhibiting a miracle of humility."—"And opening their treasures, they offered him gifts," in token of their homage; "gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Mysterious gifts! which on the one hand referred to the properties belonging to the infant, and on the other were expressive of the disposition of their own hearts in his regard. In the gold they presented a voluntary tribute as to a great king, in the incense they offered to him a sacrifice of praise as to the true God, and in myrrh they acknowledged his having a true human body like ours.* They likewise may be considered as offering to him with the gold, the affection of their hearts; with the incense all the respect and adoration their minds were capable of: and with the myrrh, all their actions and sufferings as men. It is with the like dispositions we ought frequently to draw near in spirit to him, making him an affectionate tender of our hearts, but first cleansed by tears of sincere repentance.

The holy kings being about to return home, God, who saw the hypocrisy and malicious designs of Herod, by a particular intimation, diverted them from their purpose of carrying back word to Jerusalem where the child was to be found. So, "having received an answer in their sleep that they should not return to Herod," leaving their affections with their infant-Saviour, "they went back another way into their own country."

Herod, though equally suspicious as violent in his temper, yet seems not to have been alarmed at their not returning back to him. He was perhaps willing to believe that they had not been successful in their search, and therefore that they would be ashamed to pass again through Jerusalem, where they might naturally expect the scoffs and railleries of his courtiers and of the people: and we may well conceive the tyrant happy at the moment, under the idea of having escaped the censures of the public, by his not having openly joined in the fruitless search.*

* Myrrh was anciently made use of in the burial of the dead.

* As to the magi, it never has been questioned but that they spent the rest of their lives in the service of God. The ancient author of the imperfect comment on St. Matthew, among the works of St. Chrysostom, says they were afterwards baptized in Persia by St. Thomas the apostle, and became themselves preachers of the gospel. Their bodies, it is said, were translated to Cologne in Germany in the 12th century.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE, AND THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN. MATT. II. LUKE. II.

IT appears from Abel's offering the firstlings of his flock, that Almighty God, from the beginning, required the first-born of every creature to be offered to him, as to the Creator and Proprietor of all things. Men, more especially, were to be consecrated to God's service; clean beasts were to be sacrificed, the fat burnt, and the flesh given to the priests: but the unclean animals were to be redeemed for a certain price, which was given to the priests: and the first-fruits of the earth and trees were to be presented to the Lord, heaved or waved on the altar, and then to be given to the priests. If this regulation did not take place at the very beginning of the world, as is highly probable, it became at least a strict law, upon the Lord's delivering all the first-born of man and beast among the Israelites from the hand of the destroying angel, in the night when he slew all those of the Egyptians. Thus, till the time of Moses and the written law, the priesthood belonged to the first-born, except where some special election was made of another, as in the case of Jacob. Then it was God chose in their stead the tribe of Levi, as a reward for their not joining in the worship of the molten calf. Wherefore, the tribe of Levi being consecrated in a special manner to the service of the tabernacle and of the temple, God was pleased to exempt the first-born of the other tribes from a compliance with this injunction, on condition of their acknowledging their former obligation to it. This they did by being presented in the temple, and redeemed by a sum of money, which appears to have been five shekels, or about 15s. sterling.*

There was another law which regarded the Blessed Virgin, ordaining that a woman after child-birth should continue for a certain time in a state called by that law unclean; during which she was not to appear in public, nor presume to touch any thing consecrated to God. This term was of forty days upon the birth of a son, the time was double for a daughter; on the expiration whereof the mother was to offer two animals in the temple, one for a holocaust or burnt-offering in lieu of her son, who by the letter of the law was devoted, and as it were confiscated to the Almighty; the other was for a sin-offering, and to be the price of her being cleansed from those impurities which both she and her infant contracted in her child-bearing. A young pigeon or turtle-dove by way of sin-offering, was required of all, whether rich or poor; and if the party were competently rich, she offered a lamb for the holocaust, but if poor, she had the option to offer either two young pigeons, or two turtle-doves, as it suit-

* See Leviticus xxvii. 6., and Numbers iii. 47. A shekel, according to Prideaux, was equal to three shillings sterling.

ed her convenience.

As our Saviour had been conceived by the Holy Ghost, and his Blessed Mother always remained a spotless Virgin, it is evident that they were not subject to the law in question. Yet they complied exactly with all the ordinances of it: 1. To prevent the scandal which others might have taken who were ignorant of their high privileges. 2. To set before us an example of obedience, and to induce us willingly to submit to all the laws of God and his Church. Wherefore, "after" the wise men were departed, and "the" forty "days of" Mary's "purification,* according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord;" as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy," i. e., shall be consecrated "to the Lord: and to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons," suitable to their mean condition. But the Lamb by which all other oblations were rendered acceptable, the Blessed Virgin carried in her arms, namely, her own divine Son, who now renewed, in a solemn and public manner, the oblation of himself to his Father, which he had already made privately in the first moment of his incarnation. With what sentiments did the divine Infant offer himself, on this occasion, to fulfil in all things the will of his Father! With what love and cheerfulness did he submit, for our redemption, to all the torments which he clearly foresaw would follow this oblation! to be whipped, crowned with thorns, and ignominiously put to death for us! Every sacrifice comprises two essential and distinct parts, the oblation and the immolation. The immolation was reserved for Mount Calvary; the oblation is now made in the temple. Between the presentation and the crucifixion there exists a close connection: there is the same victim, the same priest, the same God, the same sacrifice: it begins to-day; it will then be consummated.—In offering himself in our behalf to his Father, Jesus Christ does not dispense with the offering which we are to make of ourselves. This obligation is rendered more strict and general. Let every Christian then learn to offer himself with this divine Victim, through which alone he can be accepted by the Father: let him devote himself with all his senses and faculties to the divine service, as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God.

"And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was in him." Whether he was a priest or not does not appear from the Gospel, as Tillemont observes, nor from the fathers. "And he had a revelation from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord: and he came" moved "by the spirit into the temple; and when his parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also," with great devotion and humility, "took him into his arms," as the object of all his affections, "and blessed God and said," being now perfectly satisfied, and desiring no longer to

* According to the Greek *their* purification; for the law of legal impurity regarded the child as well as the mother.

see the light of this world, nor any creatures on earth: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people," and not for the Jews alone; "a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

This canticle has two parts. In the first, Simeon blesses God for this signal favour in his regard; insinuating that he had long wished to be taken out of this world, rather than continue a spectator of the general corruption of the Jewish people, and particularly of the depravation which prevailed in the synagogue and in all Jerusalem. He further expresses himself sensible that God had prolonged his existence until he should see the Messias, who was to bring a remedy to these evils. He adds, that having now witnessed with his eyes this Saviour whom God had sent, and for whose coming he had so long sighed, no further wish remained to him, and therefore that he should now die contented: accordingly, after reminding God of the promise formerly made to him, he acknowledges its being fulfilled, and expresses his hopes of quickly departing this life in peace.

In the remaining part of this canticle, Simeon declares the reason of the great joy and satisfaction he has in leaving the world, viz., not merely this transient view of the Messias, but (speaking in the language of the prophets, of future times as if already passed,) the certainty he is under, that God has presented this his Son to the view of all nations, to be the object of their faith and worship, the foundation of their hopes, the Mediator of their reconciliation, the reparation of all their losses, and the standard of their salvation. This his divine Son is therefore presented both to the Jews and Gentiles in a form suited to their respective wants. The Gentiles were plunged into the dark shades of idolatry,—the Jews were the scorn and the outcast of all nations. To the former he comes as a light to enlighten them by the true faith, and to the latter he is a subject that they may glory in, before all other nations, as being the favoured nation, from which the Saviour of the world originated, and from which all others shall derive the author of their eternal salvation.

To this first testimony in favour of Jesus, the holy Simeon adds another extremely afflicting to his Blessed Mother. For when "his father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him, Simeon," as an old man if not as a priest, "blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel," according to the good or bad use they make of his graces; "and for a sign which shall be contradicted" by the wicked, who oppose his doctrine and the establishment of his kingdom. "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce," when on mount Calvary thou shalt witness the sorrows of thy beloved Son, together with the reproaches and blasphemies that shall be uttered against him: "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," and disclosed, when some shall believe, and others remain hardened in tneir obstinacy.

"And," besides Simeon, "there was one Anna a prophetess, the daugh-

ter of Phinuel, of the tribe of Aser," who likewise bore testimony in favour of Jesus. "She was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity," i. e., only seven years in the married state; "and she was a widow until" about "fourscore and four years: who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day." The redemption of the world by the promised Messias, then much spoken of and expected, was probably the chief subject of her devotions, as well as of holy Simeon's; and St. Austin is of opinion, that she would not marry again, because it was no longer the time to contribute to this mystery by the married state, but to serve God in a more holy manner by purity and continency. "Now she, at the same hour, coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of him to all" of Jerusalem "that looked for the redemption of Israel."*

It was on this occasion that the prophecy of Aggeus and Malachy was fulfilled, when speaking of the second temple, they declare that however inferior it might be to the first, it shall be more honoured by the presence of the Desired of all nations. "The Desired of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts.....Great shall be the glory of this last house more than the first, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." The temple also had been a little before more sumptuously re-built by Herod, as it were for the more solemn reception and honour of this its Lord, though intended by Herod merely for his own glory and vanity. It was begun to be repaired by him in the twenty-first year of his reign, and in the space of about eight years, was finished as to the body of the house; but all the outworks and buildings were not finished till forty-six years afterwards, which was about the time when our Lord, after receiving baptism from John, began his preaching.*

The presentation of the child Jesus by his mother in the temple, is an instruction to christian parents the most important and essential: for as there can be nothing in life more dear to parents than their children, so nothing in reason ought to engage their attention more, than to procure them real happiness. For this reason it is their duty to recommend them frequently to God, to pray devoutly for them, and to put them in the way of obtaining the divine blessing. Their innocence is a precious treasure committed to their care, of which God will one day demand an exact account. Their timely instruction in christian piety is a charge of the utmost consequence both to themselves and children, a charge which cannot be fulfilled without steady application. A certain tenderness of feeling, which unfortunately leads some parents to indulge their children's humours, and to flatter their pettish inclinations, is a mistaken fondness; it is but a selfish love, and a real cruelty to those whom they think they love, according to

* It is highly probable that holy Simeon and Anna died soon after the testimony which they gave on this occasion in favour of Jesus Christ. The Church honours them both in the number of her saints. The former on the 8th of October, the latter on the 1st of September.

* See John ii. 20.

that oracle of the wisest of men: "he that spareth the rod, hateth his child; but he that loveth, chastens him betimes."

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT. MATT II. LUKE II.

"AFTER" Mary and Joseph "had" thus "performed all things according to the law of the Lord, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him." This sudden and unexpected flight must have exposed this holy family to many inconveniences and sufferings in so long a journey, as the greater part of the way lay through deserts, and among strangers; yet St. Joseph alleges no excuses, nor inquires when they were to return, resigning himself to all the dispensations of Providence. St. Chrysostom observes, that God treats thus all his servants, sending them frequently trials, to clear their hearts from the rust of self-love; but, at the same time, intermixing seasons of consolation.* "Joseph," says he, "is anxious on seeing the Virgin with child: an angel removes that fear; he rejoices at the child's birth, but a great fear succeeds; the furious king seeks to destroy the child, and the whole city is in an uproar to take away his life. This is followed by another joy, the adoration of the magi; a new sorrow then arises, he is ordered to fly into a foreign, unknown country, without help or acquaintance." Accordingly he "arose and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt; and he was there" about a year, i. e., "until the death of Herod.* That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet" Osee, chap. xi. 1., "saying: Out of Egypt have I called my Son."†—It is the opinion of the holy Fathers, that upon their entering Egypt, at the presence of the child Jesus, all the oracles of that superstitious country were struck dumb, and the statues of their gods trembled, and in some places fell to the ground, according to that of Isaiah xix. "And the statues of the Egyptians shall be shaken in his presence."‡

It is believed§ that the holy family

* Hom. 8. in Matt.

* The death of Herod happened four years before the common æra, as appears from Josephus.

† (In the LXX. *ta tekna anto*, filios ejus.) Although these words seem originally to refer to the Israelites, yet as their captivity in Egypt was a figure of the slavery of sin, under which all mankind groaned, and as their deliverance by Moses was a figure of man's redemption by our Saviour Christ; so in a mystical and spiritual sense they agree to our Saviour, who was the Son of God in a more appropriate sense, than was the people of Israel.

‡ This is affirmed by St. Athan. l. de Incar. Eusebius, Demon. Evang. b. 6. c. 20. St. Cyril, Cat. 10. St. Amb. in Ps. 118. St. Jer., in Isai. 19, &c. It is not however probable, as Saurez observes, that all the statues of the Egyptian idols fell down on this occasion, but only some of them, especially where Christ dwelt.

§ Calmet. But Tandinus conjectures that Joseph would rather take up his residence at Alexandria, where there was a flourishing synagogue, and a great concourse of Jews.


THE
Flight into Egypt.

took up their habitation in the town of Hermopolis, and to this day is shown a place called Matara, between Cairus and Heliopolis, where is a fountain in which the holy Virgin is said to have washed the linen of the infant Jesus, and which is held in great veneration throughout the whole country.

"Then Herod," who had informed himself of the birth of the king of the Jews only with a view to destroy him, "perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry, and sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under,* according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men," conceiving that this new-born king would be in the number of the slain.† But what does human prudence avail when counteracted by the wisdom of God?—it is probable that this most barbarous and inhuman order was not executed by a sudden irruption or promiscuous massacre, as is usually supposed, and as painters choose to represent it, but with some show of judiciary process. The soldiers, led on by their officers, went from house to house with the most recent and exact list of the inhabitants, and forced them to produce such children as came within the description of the bloody edict. It is not to be supposed that the military would pay attention to the parent's evidence as to the age of the children, otherwise many would have escaped the sword. On the contrary, they peremptorily called for such children as were within the terms described to them, and these they massacred in the sight of the disconsolate parents.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying; A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted because they were not." Rama is a village not far from this town, and the sepulchre of Rachel was in a field belonging to it. The slaughter also was probably extended into the neighbouring tribe of Benjamin, which descended from Rachel. The prophet,

* i. e. All those who were born during the two years preceding the apparition of the star, which denoted that Christ the Messias was actually born. It is a mistake, therefore, to imagine that the star appeared for two years before the birth of Christ. We may however infer from hence, that the massacre of the children did not take place immediately after the departure of the wise men, but that Herod waited for some time, and did not take his cruel resolution till after the report of Christ's birth was noised abroad in Jerusalem after his presentation in the temple.

† In Herod we see how blind and how cruel ambition is, which is ready to sacrifice every thing, even Jesus Christ to his views.—The tyrant lived not long to enjoy the kingdom which he feared so much to lose. Josephus calls him the most execrable of mankind, and says that his distemper appeared to be a judgment upon him for his crimes. He laboured under a most malignant fever, attended with an asthma, cramps, and contraction of the nerves, together with other nauseous symptoms. Antipater, whom Herod his father had cast into prison for a conspiracy against his life, hearing in his dungeon in what a lamentable condition he lay, strongly solicited his jailor to set him at liberty, hoping to obtain the crown; but the officer acquainted Herod with the whole affair The tyrant was so enraged by this representation, that though in the very agonies of death, he commanded one of his guards to slay Antipater without farther delay. Not content with causing many to be put to barbarous deaths during the course of his malady, he commanded the Jews that were of the principal rank and quality, to be shut up in the circus at Jericho, and gave orders to his sister Salome and her husband Alexas to have them all massacred as soon as he should expire, saying, that as the Jews heartily detested him, they would of course rejoice at his departure; but he would make a general mourning at his death. But Salome and Alexas were not wicked enough to become the executioners of so bloody a design, but permitted all that were shut up to return to their respective homes. Herod died five days after he had put his son Antipater to death. Macrobius, an heathen writer of the 5th century, relates that Augustus, when he had heard that among the children which Herod had commanded to be slain under two years old, his own son had been massacred, said: "It is better to be Herod's hog than his son." By this he alluded to the Jewish law of not eating, and consequently not killing swine. Probably the historian imagined the son to have been slain amongst the children, because the news of both massacres reached Rome about the same time. See Josephus, l. 17. c 8, 9, and 10.

by an excellent prosopopeia attributes to Rachel the cries and moanings of the women of Bethlehem, because her sepulchre was near to that city on the road to Jerusalem. The Ethiopians in their liturgy, and the Greeks in their calendar, count fourteen thousand children massacred on this occasion; but that number exceeds all bounds, nor is it confirmed by any authority of weight.—These innocent victims were the flowers and the first fruits of the martyrs, and it was their peculiar glory, not only to die for the sake of Christ, but also in the place of Christ, or in his stead. How few of them, perhaps, if they had lived, would have escaped the dangers of the world, which by its maxims and example, bears every thing down before it like an impetuous torrent! What snares, what sins, what miseries were they preserved from by this grace! With songs of praise and love they will never fail, through all eternity, to thank their Saviour for his infinite mercy to them. Their ignorant mothers indeed did not know this, and therefore they wept without comfort: so Christians often lament as misfortunes many accidents which, in the designs of heaven, are the greatest mercies.

"But when Herod was dead," * which, according to some chronologers, happened that same year in December, but more probably at the end of March or the beginning of April in the following year, "behold an angel of the Lord," most likely Gabriel as before, "appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead who sought the life of the child. Who arose and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.* But hearing that Archelaus," a cruel and jealous prince, "reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep, retired into the quarters of Galilee," then under the dominion of his brother Herod Antipas; "and coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth," where the wonderful occurrences attending our Lord's birth were not generally known. "That it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets, that he shall be called a Nazarite."† Such in fact was our Blessed Saviour both as to the name and meaning of it; for the word Nazarite, or Nazarene, signifies one separated from the world and consecrated to God. Wherefore Christ was deservedly called so, as well for taking up his residence at Nazareth, as for fulfilling the signification of this name by a total separation from all earthly impurities, and by a perfect consecration of himself to God.‡

* According to Sandinus, &c., Herod died an. U. C. 750 four years before the vulgar æra, at the end of March, or at latest at the beginning of April, as appears from Josephus. Hence it will follow that Joseph with his family, remained about a year in Egypt. St. Epiphanius, however, says two, Nicephorus three, others five, and others again seven years.

* Although St. Luke places the return of Mary and Joseph into Galilee immediately after they had accomplished at Jerusalem all that the law required of them; yet what St. Matthew relates as to the cause of this retreat and of Joseph's apprehension, evinces that this is to be understood not of their return from Judea, but from Egypt, where they had taken refuge to escape the cruelty of Herod. Hence we may observe with St. Austin, that the Evangelists often relate things as immediately succeeding one another, though a considerable space of time may have intervened between the transactions. Sandinus, &c. however, think that Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth before their flight into Egypt.

† These words do not occur in the prophetical writings now extant: but many of them, as St. Chrysostom observes, may have been lost. According to St. Jerome's explanation, the word Nazarite, or Nazarene, from the Hebrew *Nezer*, signifies *separated* and distinguished from others by virtue and sanctity; and as all the prophets foretold that Christ should be holy, therefore St. Matthew does not specify any one prophet, but cites them in general.

‡ The return of Jesus out of Egypt is celebrated in the

CHAPTER XII.

JESUS IS FOUND IN THE TEMPLE IN THE MIDST OF THE DOCTERS. LUKE II.

"And the child" Jesus "grew, and was strengthened full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in him." Not that there was any real increase in those supereminent gifts which from the first moment he possessed in the fullest measure; but they were manifested outwardly more and more, as the increase of his age and new circumstances seemed to call for their exertion. Of this St. Luke has left us a memorable example in the following account.

"And his parents," according to the injunction of the law, "went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the passover," to adore God in his temple, and make their offering.* "And when he was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast," took him with them, probably for the first time;† for he could not perhaps, at an earlier age, have performed so long a journey, it being above eighty miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem, "The days being now ended, when they were returning, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and" at night "sought him among their kindred and acquaintance; and not finding him as they expected, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him" with heavy hearts, as being uncertain what accident might have befallen him. Not that their feelings on this occasion argued any disbelief of his divinity; but as they knew that during the whole time of his infancy, he had been pleased to submit to all the infirmities of that tender age, so they were carried away by a natural tenderness on this occasion, being unable to conceive for what possible reason he should thus absent himself from them. "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers: and seeing him, they wondered" to find him thus placed in so honourable a station among the doctors of the law. "And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy Father and I, with grief, were seeking thee.*

Roman Martyrology on the 7th of January. See Bollandus.

* A similar law requires our attendance at church on Sundays and Holidays; and how do we comply with this duty? Are we desirous of joining with the faithful on these days, in offering up to God the great sacrifice of the new law? Are we willing to submit to some temporal inconvenience for the sake of partaking of those spiritual graces which Christ has promised to such as are assembled in his name? Matt. xviii. 20.

† Grotius and Calmet observe that children were not obliged by the law till after twelve years of age, when they were called *children of the precept, filii præcepti.*

* Aelred, our countryman, and Abbot of Rieval, in his sermon *on losing the child Jesus*, takes notice that this conduct to his parents, is a true representation of that which he observes in regard to our souls, whilst he seems to withdraw himself from us, for a short time, in order to make us seek him the more earnestly.—We may remark, that the Gospel represents the Blessed Virgin as occasionally speaking with her divine Son, but never St. Joseph. On this occasion she does not say to her Son: I and thy father, but thy father and I, because she did not consider her own dignity, but the order of conjugal subjection. Non ostendit sui uteri dignitatem, sed attendit ordinem conjugalem. St. Aug.— We may likewise observe, that no mention is made of the Bles-

And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?" insinuating that not St. Joseph, but only God, was his Father. These are the first words which the Evangelists specify to have been spoken by Jesus and they contain an important lesson for our instruction, which is that of being ever employed about the business of our heavenly Father. "And they understood not his word that he spoke unto them," i. e., as to the time when, or the manner how, he intended to manifest himself to the world. However, such was their profound reverence and respect for him, that they asked no further explanation. And having thus established his independence in what related to his sacred ministry, "he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them," paying them all filial attention, deference, and submission. Astonishing example of humility and obedience, which is justly proposed to the imitation of youth, and of all Christians. "Who," says St. Bernand, "was subject? God: to whom? to men. He whom the powers of heaven obey, was subject to Mary: learn therefore, man to obey, learn O earth, to be subject, and thou, O dust, learn to submit."—This short word of the Evangelist concerning the private life of Christ comprises an abridgement of the whole duty of a Christian. The spirit of religion is a spirit of submission,—the practice of religion is a practice of obedience. If we obey God, we shall necessarily comply with all religious duties; if we obey the superiors whom he has placed over us in this world, we shall acquit ourselves of all the civil duties of society.—"And his mother laid up all these things in her heart," that she might nourish her piety by an uninterrupted meditation of them, might regulate her life conformably to them, and afterwards be enabled to communicate them to others, when, in due time, they were to be announced throughout the world, by the tongues of the Apostles aud the pens of the Evangelists. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man," although, in fact, he were, from the first moment of his conception, equally replenished with wisdom and grace in the sublimest degree, and in the most permanent manner; as the sun, though always equally luminous in itself, diffuses more and more the rays of its brightness in proportion as it advances in its mid-day course.—Such ought also to be our spiritual course: as we advance in age, we should advance in virtue; and though we cannot attain to the summit of perfection, we should at least aspire to it, since the measure of our recompence in the next life will be proportioned to that degree of merit which we shall have obtained in this.

This is all that is to be found in scripture concerning Jesus Christ, from the time of his returning out of Egypt till his baptism, when he was about

sed Virgin Mary during the sacred ministry of her Son, except at the marriage feast of Cana in chap. 18. and on another occasion when she was *without* and desirous of speaking to him. (See chap. 50.) Though she was the most holy and the most perfect of all pure creatures, yet our Lord, as St. Epiphanius remarks, (Hær. 78.) did not give her the power of baptizing, of blessing the apostles, or presiding over his church on earth. And St. Thomas, (3 P. Q. 27.) Miraculorum autem usus sibi non competebat dum vireret, quia tunc temporis confirmanda erat doctrina Christi miraculis; et ideo soli Christo et ejus discipulis, qui erant bajuli doctrinæ Christi, conveniebat miracula facere. Propter quod etian de Joanne Baptista dicitur (Jo. 10.) quod signum fecit nullum.

thirty years of age. In addition to which it may be affirmed, that he did not apply himself to letters; and as his father and mother were obliged by their poverty to continual labour for the sake of gaining a subsistence,* we cannot doubt but that Jesus worked along with them in testimony of his humble obedience and subjection. The business which he and his reputed father followed was that of a carpenter, since the Jews called him by this name; and he probably wrought both in iron and wood, agreeably to what St. Justin says of him, "that he made ploughs and yokes for oxen."—St. Bridget† mentions, that Christ divided his time into three portions: one for prayer and singing the praises of God; another for manual labour; and the third for relieving the necessities of the body, according to exact measure and rule.‡ Certain it is that the holy family Jesus Mary and Joseph, living in their poor cottage, exhibit to us the most perfect model of heavenly conversation upon earth.* How great must have been the happiness of Mary and Joseph in thus enjoying the presence of Jesus; always burning with the most ardent love for him; inviolably attached to his sacred person, and always employed in his service! What must have been their transports in beholding him, their devotion in listening to him, and their joy in possessing him! O heavenly life! O anticipation of celestial bliss! O divine conversation! We may imitate them, and share some degree of this advantage, by conversing often with Jesus, by contemplating his most amiable goodness, and by kindling in our breasts the fire of his holy love The effects of this love, if it be sincere, will necessarily appear in our putting on his spirit, and imitating his example and virtues; it will appear in our studying to walk continually in the divine presence, finding God every where, and esteeming all the time lost which we do not spend with God, or for his honour and glory.†

* That the parents of Jesus had possessions and revenues both at Bethlehem and Nazareth, is a mere conjecture, to be found only in Nicephorus, l. i. c, 13—See Chap. 54. in a note.

† *In Regula Salvatoris*, c. 2.

‡ See c. 58. b. 6. of her Revelations.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE DESERT. MATT. III. MARK I. LUKE III.

"Now," when Jesus was leading an obscure life at Nazareth, "in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar,§ Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea," for the Romans, "and Herod"‡ Antipas "being tetrarch of Galilee,

§ Dating from the time that he was admitted to reign in copartnership with Augustus, viz. an. U. C. 764, of Christ 16, of the vulgar æra 11. Augustus died an. U. C, 767, of Christ 19, of the vulgar æra 14. Hence it follows that Christ was baptised an. U. C. 779, in the 31st year of his age, and the 26th of the vulgar æra.

* St Irenæus mentions and refutes some stories fabricated by certain heretics in relation to the infancy of Jesus Christ, l. 1. adv. Hæreses. St. Chrysostom likewise in his 16 Hom. on St. John, rejects as false the miracles ascribed to him during that period; for these would have drawn him forth from that humble state which he purposely made choice of in order to live unnoticed and unknown to mankind till the commencement of his public ministry.

† As to St. Joseph it is generally believed that he departed this life before Jesus entered upon his public ministry. We cannot doubt but he had the happiness to be attended by Jesus and Mary in his last moments; and hence it is particularly invoked for the grace of a happy death. He probably died at Nazareth, where he dwelt after his return from Egypt. His festival is kept on the 19th of March.

and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina. Under the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, * the word of the Lord was made unto John the Son of Zachary in the desert," where he had retired. Wherefore we may here date "the beginning of the Gospel," or good news, "of Jesus Christ the Son of God, as it is written in Isaias the prophet: Behold I send my angel before thy face," i. e. before thou enter upon thy public ministry, "who shall prepare the way before thee."

The detail of the actions of the holy Precursor may be reduced to five different heads: 1. His employment, viz. his preaching and baptising. 2. The austerity of his life. 3. The effect or fruits produced by his preaching. 4. The particular advice given by him to each state and condition of life. 5. The testimony borne by him repeatedly in favour of Jesus Christ.

"In those days * came John Baptist, into all the country about the Jordan, in the desert of Judea, baptizing and preaching the baptism of penance unto the remission of sins. And saying: Do penance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

This baptism of John represented the manner in which the souls of men must be cleansed from all sin and vicious habits, to be made partakers of Christ's spiritual kingdom and it was an emblem of the interior effects of sincere repentance. The Jews practised several religious washings of the body as legal purifications, but none of these had so great and so mystical a signification

Many in imitation of Gerson and St. Teresa, have a particular devotion to this saint, and choose him for their patron. See his life in Butler's Lives of the Saints, March 19.

‡ Herod, surnamed the Great, died detested by the Jews for his vices, oppressions, and barbarous cruelty, by which he had not only contrived the extinction of the Asmonean royal family, and cut off the most illustrious princes of the Jewish Sanhedrim and nation, but also had put to death his virtuous wife Mariamne (the daughter of Hircanus, the last Asmonean king) and the two sons whom he had by her, Alexander and Aristobulus, and Antipater the eldest of his sons. He left at his death (see chap. 11, for a description of it) at least four sons, Archelaus and Herod Antipas by Malthace, Philip by Cleopatra, and Herod Philip by another Mariamne. Herod by his will made a partition of his dominions among three of these sons, leaving to Archelaus Judea, Idumea and Samaria, with the title of king; to Philip Trachonitis, Auronitis, Panea, and Batanea; and to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Perea. This disposition was confirmed by Augustus with the following limitation, that Archelaus should rule only with the title of ethnarch, till he should shew himself worthy to be honored with that of king, which he never obtained. For inheriting the cruelty of his Father, he was accused at Rome by the Jews and Samaritans of tyranny and mal-administration, and in the tenth year of his reign deposed by Augustus, and his goods confiscated. He died in banishment at Vienne in Gaul.

Upon his deposition Judea was made part of the province of Syria, and seized upon by the proconsul Quirinus, under whom Caponius, a Roman of the equestrian order, was appointed governor, with the title of procurator of Judea. Philip. the tetrarch or prince of Trachonitis, seems to have been the honestest man of his family: he lived in the quiet possession of his small territory 37 years, and died without issue in the 22nd year of Tiberius. Aristobulus, whom his father Herod put to death, left a son called Agrippa, (who afterwards obtained the kingdom of Judea), and a daughter named Herodias, who was married to Herod Philip. This some understand to be the tetrarch Philip, but Calmet and others prove him to be the fourth son of Herod who had no share in the tetrarchates, and who lived privately till Vespasian's time, when being 80 years old, he was entreated by Josephus to revise the books of his history, which he sent him. This historian confirms our opinion: for speaking of the rape of Herodias, he says that Herod the tetrarch went to the house of his brother Herod, the son of Mariamne the daughter of Simon the high-priest. These principalities were called tetrarchates, that word signifying in Greek a fourth part, the dominions of Herod being divided into four portions; for besides the three above mentioned, one Lysanias was tetrarch of a small territory between Libanus and Antilebanus, called Abilina, as appears from St. Luke, ch. 3. See Calmet, and Synops. Crit. ibid. The Jews styled some of the tetrarchs *kings*.

* There was probably but one high priest at a time, and Caiaphas had this office and title all the ten years that Pilate governed Judea. See Josephus, l. 18. Antiq. c. 3. Some indeed imagine that Annas and Caiaphas were conjointly high priests this year; but as Calmet observes, it is more likely that the former preserved only the name and quality of high priest to which he was justly entitled, but without exercising any of its functions.

* Hence it is clear that these, *at that time, then, in those days, &c.* which frequently occur in the Evangelists, do not denote that what is going to be mentioned immediately follows what had just been narrated. They point out indefinitely a certain time, or the time when what follows happened. For it is certain that what St. Matthew mentions here did not take place till about 30 years after what he had just before mentioned.



St. John.

as the baptism of John. It differed however entirely from the great sacrament of baptism, which Christ soon after instituted, to which it was much inferior in virtue and efficacy, and of which it was a kind of type. Whence this baptism of John is called by the Fathers a kind of partition between the law and gospel; it prepared men to become Christians, but it did not make them so. It was even conferred in the name of Christ, or in that of the Holy Ghost, who had not been as yet given. *

By the means of St. John's preaching penance, God prepared the Jews for the kingdom of heaven, which was now approaching; not an earthly kingdom, such as they had figured to themselves on the coming of the Messias, but that inward and spiritual reign, which begins here on earth by faith showing itself by charity and good works, and which will attain its utmost completion in heaven by the perfection of charity; a reign which consists in this, that Almighty God having through Jesus Christ destroyed the empire of the devil over the hearts of men, sovereignly reigns there in this life by knowledge and love, and in the next life by the sight and enjoyment of the divine essence, which constitutes our eternal happiness.

The character of a preacher is properly applicable to St. John Baptist, as the Evangelist shows: "for this is he," says St. Matthew, "who was spoken of in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet, a voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths;" that is, correct every vicious disposition of your hearts that may disqualify you for the coming of Christ. Many of the Jews were in a despondingway, and had given up all thoughts of his coming; others presuming upon their good works were puffed up with pride and vanity, whilst the generality were guilty of hypocrisy, and under the cloak of an exterior piety, concealed the greatest corruption of heart: lastly, some who were in the right way, were not without vicious attachments, which retarded their progress and advancement in virtue. But the prophet foretells by the mouth of St. John Baptist, that "every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." That is, by the coming of the Saviour sent by God, these valleys of despondency and despair shall be filled up; these mountains of pride and hills of vanity shall be levelled; these crooked ways of hypocrisy shall, by a rectitude of intention, be rendered straight; and lastly, these thorns shall be plucked up, and these clods of earth broken, viz. these anxious cares and solicitudes for earthly goods shall yield to better employments, such as truly deserve our attention. It may be remarked, that these are the four great obstacles by which Christian piety is, to this day, retarded in its progress; and from these Jesus Christ delivers those by his grace, who seek him in a proper manner.

The austerity of the life of the holy Precursor added weight to his preaching: for "John had his garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his food was" no

* John vii. 39.

other than what he found in the desert, viz. "locusts," a kind of large grasshoppers, "and wild honey," such as abounded in Judea, and was to be met with in hollow trees and in the cavities of rocks, a species of food equally poor and insipid, and such as was then the sustenance of the most indigent classes of mankind.*

This rigid mode of life was consonant with the designs of Providence, and every way suitable to the calling of St. John. He who preaches penance, ought to set the example of it to his hearers, thus to convince them of its necessity; whereas the Pharisees were ever ready to load sinners with the heaviest burthens, whilst they themselves refused to bear the smallest share. 2. It was necessary that he who was to declare himself openly in favour of Jesus Christ, and to gain him many disciples, should render his testimony perfectly unexceptionable: 1. By his sanctity, one of the most ordinary marks of which is a great austerity of life. 2. By his disinterestedness; for he who can content himself with locusts and wild honey, can scarce be imagined to seek the favour of others by the arts of flattery, or by a testimony not founded on truth. 3. By a love of solitude: in fact, he who has spent above thirty years in the lonesome recesses of a desert, cannot easily be suspected of deceit or collusion, in bearing favorable testimony to a person unknown to him, though he were allied to him in blood.

The fame of John's mission was no sooner spread abroad, than "there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and all the country about the Jordan and were baptised by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins." The advice which he gave varied according to the different principles of his hearers, and was suited to their several states and conditions of life. There were amongst the Jews, long before the birth of Jesus Christ, three distinct sects. 1. The Essenians, whose faith and morals were of all the most irreproachable. 2. The Pharisees,* whose institution was in its commencement laudable, but which had degenerated into an uniform system of hypocrisy. They paid a superstitious attention to astrology, and thence were become fatalists, attributing every event to destiny; they likewise believed the transmigration of the souls of the just into other bodies. In other respects they were noted dissemblers, avaricious, full of ambition, jealous of rank and precedence, seekers of honour and esteem almost to a degree of idolatry; and whilst they distinguished themselves by an exterior sanctity, calculated to deceive the vulgar, they were defiled with all kinds of secret crimes. 3. The Sadducees, who, as some think, derived this name from Sadock, who lived 300 years before Christ, were professed unbelievers with respect to spiritual beings, such as the angels and devils, and likewise with regard to the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; and their morals were undoubtedly conformable to so profane a creed.

* Modern travellers assure us, that in some countries locusts are brought to market in large quantities, but are eat only by the common people, either fried in oil or dried in the sun. St. John probably eat them raw.

* They are thought to have taken their name from the word *Parasch*, which signifies *separation*, because they were separated from all others in their extraordinary pretences to sanctity and some particular observances.

"And" St. John "seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: Brood of vipers, who hath shown you to fly from the wrath that is to come? Bring forth therefore worthy fruits of penance. And say not within yourselves: we have Abraham for our father: for I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham," in order to the accomplishment of the promises he made to this patriarch; and therefore you are not to imagine that, on this account, he will be prevented from punishing you. "For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit," by true faith and repentance, "shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."

"And the people," * moved with his preaching, "asked him, saying: What then shall we do? He answering said to them:" that they were to give alms out of their superfluity: "thus," says he, "he that hath two coats, let him give to him who hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner," i. e. impart a share thereof to those in want. Under these acts of mercy, all other similar ones are of course comprised.

"And the Publicans," who were the collectors of the taxes, "also came to be baptised, and said to him: Master, what shall we do" to be saved? "But he said to them, do" and exact "nothing more than that which is appointed you" by public authority. "And the soldiers also asked him, saying: what shall we do? And he said to them: do violence to no man, neither calumniate any man, and be content with your pay."

"And as the people was of opinion, and all were thinking in their hearts of John that perhaps he might be the Christ," who was then expected by all the nations of the East, * "he answered by candidly stating his own great inferiority, and that of his baptism, compared with the future baptism of the Messias, "saying unto all: I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but he that shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry," nor "to stoop down and loose," i. e. to do for him the meanest office. "He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and the fire" of his divine love, in order to purify you from your sins.

St. John then describes the Messias as the sovereign Judge of all mankind, under the figure or similitude of a labourer, "whose fan," says he "is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." The winnowing fan which separates the corn from the chaff, represents to us the last judgment, when the elect will be separated from the reprobate, though in this life they be indiscriminately mingled together. The barn floor is the Church of God, the granary is heaven, where the elect will be stored up as excellent grain: the unquenchable fire is the fire of hell, into which the reprobate as chaff will be precipitated, there to burn in eternal flames.

* i. e. The meaner sort of the people, and even the greatest sinners, such as the Publicans and women of bad character; for these were converted, and believed, whilst the Pharisees remained hardened in their sins, rejecting both Christ and St. John his precursor.

* This appears clear from Sueton. in Vespas. c. 4. Tacitus Hist. 1. 5. c. 4. Joseph. de Bello Jud. 1. 7. c. 12.

These important subjects St. John urgently inculcated to his hearers, "and many other things exhorting did he preach," which the Evangelists have not recorded.*

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS GENEALOGY ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.
MATT. III. MARK I. LUKE III.

"And it came to pass in those days," i. e. towards the close of St, John's mission, "when all the people was baptised, then Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, to the Jordan unto John, to be" also "baptised by him."*

His design herein was, 1. To sanction the baptism of the holy precursor by his own example, and to give his approbation to the practice of others who had received it. 2. Not to lose this occasion of humbling himself, by placing himself among sinners, as if he had been one of their number, and stood in need of the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. 3. It was to sanctify the waters, says St. Ambrose, i. e. to give them the virtue to cleanse away the sins of men in the laver of baptism. St. Austin and St. Thomas think that he instituted then the holy sacrament of baptism, which he soon after administered by his apostles, whom doubtless he had first baptised himself. On the present occasion, we may contemplate, 1. A species of holy contest which took place between the profound respect of the Baptist on one hand, and the yet more admirable humility of Jesus Christ on the other.

2. The wonders exhibited to the eyes of all the by-standers after Jesus Christ was baptised.

"But John," who knew Jesus by a divine revelation, and was full of awe and respect for his sacred person, "was for hindering him, saying I ought to be baptised by thee" who art holiness itself, "and comest thou to me" a sinful man. "And Jesus answering, said to him, suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice," i. e. to exercise and give examples of all virtues, amongst which humility is the foundation which sustains all the rest. "Then he permitted him, and" so Jesus "was baptised by John in the Jordan," on the 6th of January, according to the received testimony of the ancient fathers. "And being baptised forthwith he came out of the water, praying, and lo! the heavens were opened to him; and he saw the spirit of God descending in a bodily shape as a dove * upon him, and remaining on him; and there came a voice from heaven, saying:

* It is clear from St. Matthew that Christ was baptised by immersion, since he who *ascended* out of the water, must first have *descended* into it. And this method of baptising by immersion was generally observed in the Church for 1300 years, as appears from the acts of councils and ancient rituals. It is imagined by some, that in the very same place of the river Jordan, where the ark stood while the Israelites passed over, our Lord (the ark of the covenant of grace) was baptised by St. John.

* St. Luke very frequently neglects the historical order of events, as is very evident here; for he immediately adds the imprisonment of St. John, although what is mentioned in the following chapter of the baptism of Jesus Christ must certainly have happened previous to that event.

* St. John testifies of himself, chap. i. 34. that he likewise saw this dove; and St. Chrysost, is of opinion, that the people saw it too, as a testimony in favour of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas and some others have thought that it was a *real* dove; others conjecture, with great probability, that it was only an apparent one. For the text is *as* a dove, *sicut* columba. Vide Sandinus, c. 7. p. 7. ed. Patavi, who cites St. Ambrose and St. Austin as of the same opinion.

Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." According to St. Matthew the following words were likewise addressed to St. John and to all present: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

By this audible declaration, and by the whole of this awful scene, God acknowledged Jesus Christ for his Son, in order thus to afford a public sanction to his sacred ministry. Investing him with the high office of Lord and Master of mankind, he thus gave a solemn approbation of all the doctrine which he was about to teach. Moreover, God thus pointed out, in a visible manner, the invisible effects of the baptism which Jesus Christ was about to institute. These were that he adopted for his children such as were baptised: that the Holy Ghost descended into their souls, and that heaven was opened to them. Lastly, this wonderful scene afforded a clear demonstration of the truth of what Jesus was going to announce to mankind, viz, that from the time of John's mission, the gates of heaven, which had been hitherto shut, were now opened to them, and that the time was come when the possession of heaven was to be the reward of those who should employ violence to obtain it.

"And Jesus began *†" his sacred ministry "about the age of thirty years (being as it was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was of Heli, who was of Mathat, who was of Levi, who was of Melchi, who was of Janne, who was of Joseph, who was of Mathathias, who was of Amos, who was of Nahum, who was of Hesli, who was of Nagge, who was of Mahath, who was of Mathathias, who was of Semei, who was of Joseph, who was of Juda, who was of Joanna, who was of Resa, who was of Zorobabel, who was of Salathiel, who was of Neri, who was of Melchi, who was of Addi, who was of Cosan, who was of Elmadan, who was of Her, who was of Jesu, who was of Eliezer, who was of Joram, who was of Mathat, who was of Levi, who was of Simeon, who was of Juda, who was of Joseph, who was of Jona, who was of Eliakim, who was of Melea, who was of Menna, who was of Mathatha, who was of Nathan, who was of David, who was of Jesse, who was of Obed, who was of Booz, who was of Salmon, who was of Naasson, who was of Aminadab, who was of Aram, who was of Esron, who was of Phares, who was of Juda, who was of Jacob, who was of Isaac, who was of Abraham, who was of Thare, who was of Nachor, who was of Sarug, who was of Ragau, who was of Phaleg, who was of Heber, who was of Sale, who was of Cainan,* who was of Arphaxad, who was of Sem, who was of Noe, who was of Lamech, who was of Methusale, who was of Henoch, who was of Jared, who was of Malaleel, who was of Canain, who was of Henos, who was of Seth, who was of Adam, who was of God."

I shall not enter into all the diffi-

† Was beginning, *erat incipiens*. This beginning does not refer to his age, but to his preaching and manifestation. Hence the precise year of Christ's age cannot be ascertained from this place. About *the age of thirty*. *Quasi* or ὡσει, may be referred either to the end of the twenty-ninth, or the beginning of the thirty-first, and does not absolutely exclude thirty. Hence different opinions; but that of Usher and Lancelot, who says that Christ was thirty-three or thirty-four years old when he was baptised, seems repugnant to the Gospel, as well as to the testimony of the ancient Fathers. See Sandinus, &c.

* Cornel. a Lap. says it is a chronological problem whether the word *Cainan* be the true reading, or whether it hath slipt into the text. Others conjecture that Cainan and Sale were only different names of one and the same person; so that the sense may be, *who was of Sale*, who is also Cainan. Qui fuit Sale, qui et Cainan.

culties of this genealogy, which is very different from that given us by St. Matthew, chap, i. St. Matthew who wrote his gospel for the Jews, commences his genealogy of Jesus Christ with Abraham, and traces it through forty-two generations; on the contrary St. Luke, who wrote for the Gentiles, began by Jesus Christ himself, and ascending up to Adam, continues through seventy-five generations. But whereas St. Matthew has given us the genealogy of St. Joseph, St. Luke seems to have written that of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* Hence Joseph is styled the son of Heli, by reason of Mary his wife. For Heli by an abbreviation is put for Heliachim, which with the Hebrews is the same name as Joachim the father of Mary; whereas Joseph's father, according to St. Matthew, was called Jacob.—Others solve the difficulty in a different manner, and affirm, that both the Evangelists trace the genealogy of Joseph, with this difference, that St. Matthew makes him descend from David by Salomon, and St. Luke by Nathan, another son, whom he had by the same Bethsabee. According to them Matthew gives his natural, and St. Luke his legal pedigree. For Matthan, who descended from David by Salomon, had for his wife Estha, who was afterwards married to Melchi or Mathat descend from David by Nathan. Mathan had by her Jacob, Mel chi had Heli; wherefore Jacob and Heli were uterine brothers, i. e. had the same mother. Heli dying without children, Jacob according to the law, espoused his widow, in order to raise up seed to his brother, and had by her Joseph, who was by nature his son, as St. Matthew relates; but according to the law he was the son of Heli, as mentioned by St. Luke. This explanation is given us by Julins Africanus, who flourished in the beginning of the third century, in his epistles to Aristides, as may be seen in Eusebius, L. 1, of his Eccles. Hist. c. 7, which explanation was adopted by St. Jerome, and most of the ancient Fathers, as Baronius observes.*

The former opinion however, viz. that St. Luke gives us the pedigree of the Blessed Virgin, is more generally received by modern commentators;† and as to what St. Jerome tells us, that it was not customary with the Jews to write the genealogies of women, it may be answered, that on this very account, St. Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, and chiefly for the Jews, had reason to conform himself to their custom, whereas St. Luke, writing in Greek to the converted Gentiles, had a special reason for writing the pedigree of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus being truly her Son, and not the son of Joseph.

* See Denis the Carthusian, Cajetan, Cor. a Lap. Melchior Canus, Barradius, Genebrard, &c.

* See Calmet's Diss. prefixed to St. Luke.
† See Bullet, *Reponses Critiques.*

CHAPTER XV.

THE FASTINGS AND TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST. MATT. IV. MARK I. LUKE IV.

"AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and immediately the" divine "Spirit drove him into the desert,"* between the Black Sea and Jericho, "to be tempted of the devil; and he was in the desert forty days and forty nights,† and was tempted by Satan, and he was with" wild "beasts." The first motive for this total separation from the world, was in order to prepare himself for the great work which he was about to undertake, viz. that of preaching the kingdom of heaven, of establishing his Church, and of redeeming mankind. By this he teaches all those whom he was to call afterwards to the same ministry, that they should previously retire into solitude, in order to converse with God in prayer, and draw down the blessing of heaven upon themselves and their undertaking. It was by a solitude of forty years in the country of Madian, that Moses, without knowing it, was prepared for the great designs of Almighty God in favour of the Hebrews.—A second motive was, in some sort, to sanctify the desert, which, in future times, was to be the refuge of so many saints against the dangers of the world.—A third motive, according to St. Ambrose,* was to afford an opportunity to the devil of attacking him by his temptations in consequence of his forlorn and abandoned state. "And he eat nothing in those" forty "days," watching, praying, and fasting continually in this hideous wilderness, in order to atone for the intemperance of our first parents in Paradise. It is thus he instructs his followers, that fasting which weakens us, and prayer which elevates us to God, are the best arms which we can make use of against the temptations of the devil. From the example which Christ sets us of fasting, St. Jerome and St. Austin derive the institution of the solemn fast of Lent: and it is strange that Protestants should condemn an observance which is so agreeable to scripture, and to the practice of all ages. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry," hereby evincing the reality of his human nature, which after being miraculously supported during so long a time, as Moses and Elias had been, was now permitted to feel hunger and thirst.

* The account which our countryman Mr. Maundrel gives us, in his travels, concerning the desert and high mountains, where our Lord was tempted, agrees in substance with what Adricomius has written on this subject, in his description of the Holy Land, p. 19. No. 97. He informs us, that in his journey from Jerusalem to the Jordan, after he passed over Mount Olivet, he proceeded in an intricate way among hills and valleys, and after some hours of travelling in this sort of road, arrived at the mountainous desert, into which our Blessed Saviour was led by the spirit to be tempted by the devil. "A miserable dry place," says he, "consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward. From the top of these hills of desolation, we had, however, a delightful prospect of Arabia, the Dead Sea, and the plains of Jericho, into which last we descended after about five hours' march from Jerusalem. As soon as we entered the plains, we turned upon the left hand, and going about one hour that way, came to the foot of the Quarentania, (so called from our Lord's forty days' fast) which they say is the mountain where the devil tempted him with the visionary scene of all the kingdoms and glories of the world.—It is very high and steep, and its ascent not only difficult but dangerous."

† This number forty may be called a mysterious number; it frequently occurs in Scripture, and, according to St. Austin, expresses the whole course of this present life, as destined to works of penance and the expiation of our sins:

* Ut Diabolum provocaret, in Luctam.

The weak and reduced state to which Jesus was brought by fasting, encouraged the devil to make his approaches and to tempt him three different ways; by which we are taught that the enemy of mankind attacks us only through our wants and weaknesses; or, in other words, through our natural or our inordinate inclinations.

To tempt is, properly speaking, to endeavour by experience to come at the knowledge of some truth of which we are ignorant, or else to try to instil and communicate the knowledge of it to others. Thus God tempts us by those occasions or opportunities of practising virtue, which he places in our way, and this he does in order to make us acquainted with the degree of strength or of weakness hidden within our hearts. But when the trials, of themselves, lead to evil, then to tempt is to solicit to sin, which is peculiar to the devil, who is thence styled the tempter; in this sense God tempteth no man.

1. Jesus Christ submitted to temptation with the view of showing that even the most perfect of God's works are to be tried by temptation, as it were to discover whether they are deserving that predilection which he has shewn them. It was fitting that Jesus Christ, his master-piece, should not in this respect, be more privileged than the angels and mankind, and that the victory of the second Adam over the devil should compensate for the overthrow of the first Adam; and so restore to God that glory which seemed, in the fall of the first man, to have suffered some diminution. 2. All succeeding Christians were to be taught by so illustrious an example, that they are unavoidably to undergo the trial of temptations: for, if the Son of God was not exempt from temptation, surely they, his followers, can have no plea for such exemption. 3. They were likewise to be apprised of the temptations which they would not fail to meet with after baptism; or, which is the same thing, whenever they should consecrate themselves, in good earnest, to the love and service of God. Finally, it was proper to teach them, by this example, how they are to combat their spiritual enemy, and by what sort of arms or weapons they may vanquish his suggestions. For we may observe with Venerable Bede in his Commentary on the fourth chapter of St. Luke, that the three temptations proposed by Satan to our Lord, comprise the three principle sources of all our sins, which are sensuality, pride, and concupiscence; according to that of St. John, 1 Ep. xi. 16. "all that is in the world is, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."

"And the tempter," i. e. the devil, probably in some bodily shape, "coming, said to him: if thou art the Son of God," according to the recent testimony given thee at thy baptism, "command that these stones be made bread" for thy nourishment. This was a temptation of sensuality, and the devil was likewise desirous to know in what sense he had been called the Son of God by a voice from heaven. And Jesus made" this "answer," full of humility and confidence in God, "it is written: Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God," i. e. he is supported by any other thing, or in



The Temptation

any other manner, as it pleaseth God, and therefore it is not necessary to have recourse to the means here proposed. Christ teaches us, by his example, how to overcome those temptations that are founded on temporal necessities, viz. by putting our confidence and trust in divine providence.

"Then the devil took him up * into the holy city of Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle" or balustrade "of the temple, and said to him: if thou be the Son of God," and hast so much confidence in his word, "cast thyself down; for it is written," Psalm xc. "that he hath given his angels charge of thee, that they preserve thee, and that they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone."

This verse of the Psalter assures the just man of the protection of God in all such dangers as are above the reach of human assistance, and when the hand of Providence alone can rescue him: but it by no means promises this protection in such dangers as are voluntarily brought upon us from an unjustifiable presumption. This is the crime which the scriptures call tempting God, and which they severely condemn. Accordingly, in opposition to this temptation to vain glory and pride, Jesus said to him: "It is written: thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," Deut. vi. 16. As if Christ had said: I must not work miracles out of vanity or presumption, and since I may go from hence by the stairs, I have no reason to tempt God, nor to cast myself down headlong. *

Baffled in his second assault, "again the devil tempted Jesus, and took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him," as in a landscape, "all the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time, and their glory, and said to him: all these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. To thee will I give all this power and the glory of them, for they are delivered to me, and I give them to whom I will. If therefore thou wilt adore me, they shall be all thine." This was the third temptation proposed to our Lord, which is that of cupidity, as it regards riches, honours, or any worldly goods. "Then Jesus saith to him: begone Satan," and no longer tempt me with the allurement of riches, dignities, or honours. "For it is written: the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve. And every temptation being ended, the devil departed from him for a time,"† viz. until the period of his passion, when by the hatred of the Pharisees and by the avarice and treachery of Judas, he found means to compass the death of him whom his artifices could not corrupt. Then it was that the ministers of Satan tempted him almost in the same way:

* This is to be understood literally, viz. that the devil, by the permissive power of God, really conveyed Jesus through the air, up to the summit of the temple. See St. Thomas, 3 Part. Q. 41. ac. 4. ad. 7. and Caj. on St. Matthew. Clerk is of opinion, that this happened only in a dream or vision; but this opinion may, with greater propriety, be called a vision or dream of his own brain, having no foundation in scripture.

* The order of these two last temptations is transposed in St. Luke. We have followed the order of St. Matthew, because it seems by his making use of these particles *then* and *again*, as if he meant to observe the due order of time in which these temptations happened.

† When the devil fails in his temptations, and is overcome, he leaves us to enjoy our triumph: but it is only *for a time*; he retires only to meditate against us new attacks, and therefore we must never think ourselves secure, but should profit of that interval to return thanks to God for having given us the victory, and should prepare ourselves for new combats and temptations, especially by fortifying and refreshing ourselves with the bread of angels in the holy communion.

If thou be the Son of God," said they, " come down from the cross."

" And behold the angels," who had been spectators of the combat and of the victories of Jesus, " came " now, " and ministered to him," bringing him such refreshments as were suitable to the exhausted state of his body.

The temptations which Jesus Christ was pleased to undergo in the wilderness, have been considered by his followers as a subject both of consolation and instruction. By example he has taught them how to fight against their spiritual enemies, and to conquer too. The struggle may be painful while it lasts, but heavenly comforts soon succeed. " Let us love retirement," say the holy fathers, " let us fast, and pray, and the devil cannot hurt us." With a lively faith let us meditate on the word of God, and it will furnish us with an impenetrable shield against the fiery darts of our enemy. Let us put our trust in Jesus Christ, the vanquisher of his enemies, and temptations will but serve to strengthen our virtues and increase our crown.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SUBSEQUENT TESTIMONY OF ST. JOHN IN FAVOUR OF JESUS CHRIST. JOHN I.

ON his return from the wilderness, Jesus passed some days upon the banks of the Jordan, thus affording to his holy precursor an opportunity of bearing testimony to him on several occasions. We have already seen one instance of it, in chap. xiii. Three others here present themselves.

The second was utterred aloud, so as to be heard at a distance, and probably before a numerous audience. For " John beareth witness of him, and crieth out, saying: this was he of whom I spake: he that shall come after me, is preferred before me, because he was before me," being from all eternity the Son of God, though born after me in time. " And " as he is the source and principle of all gifts and graces, therefore " of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace," i. e., in lieu of the exterior graces of the old law, he has given us abundance of graces in the new law, to some one grace, to some another. " For the law was given by Moses," a mere man " but grace and truth," signified by that law, " were brought by Jesus Christ," who is God and man. " No man hath seen God at any time," and therefore Moses did not see him as he is in himself, nor could make him known so perfectly as " the only begotten Son " of God, " who is," from all eternity, " in the bosom of the father: he " it is who " hath declared him " to us.

" Now this is the third testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem, priests and Levites to him, to ask and examine him " juridically concerning his person, his employment, and his ministry. They had come to the resolution of instituting this inquiry, in consequence of the various and wonderful circumstances which, to their astonishment, were related concerning this holy personage. The

holy precursor received them with the respect due to their rank, acknowledging in them the authority of those by whom they were commissioned. This prudent conduct tended to gain still greater sanction to his mission. They proposed to him four questions, three of which concerned him personally, the fourth regarded his ministry.

As the Jews lived in the expectation of the coming of the Messias, and of Elias his precursor, they asked him which of these two he was: "Who art thou?" said they. It does not appear, that by this question they sought to ensnare him, or obtain a pretext for aspersing his character. Jesus Christ, speaking of this deputation, John v. 33. gives no unfavourable idea of the purity of their intentions. This question clearly tended to discover whether or not he were the Messias. John therefore left them not a moment in suspense, "and he confessed," in the most express terms, "and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ."

True humility * cannot bear the very mention of undue honour, and the higher applause it meets with among men, the lower it sinks in a deep sense and sincere acknowledgment of its own baseness and unworthiness; to God alone it desires to give all praise and glory, for his pure, gratuitous goodness and mercy. In these sentiments St. John made the above declaration, and lest they might not have perfectly understood him, he repeated it both affirmatively, by stating that he was a distinct person from the Messias; and negatively, by saying absolutely, that he was not the Messias.

* Non vult se nec sua prædicari, sed Deum in donis suis optat benedici, qui cuncta ex mera charitate largitur. Vide l. 3. de Imit. c. 54.

"And they asked him: what then? art thou Elias? and he said I am not Art thou a prophet? and he answered no." He was indeed Elias in spirit, being the harbinger of the Son of God, and in this sense he is called so by our Saviour, Matt. xi. 14. He was likewise a prophet eminently, and more than a prophet, it being his office not to foretell Christ at a distance, like other prophets, but to point him out now present among men. But because he was not Elias in person, nor a prophet in the strict sense of the word, as implying one who foretels things to come, hence he rejects these titles, and seems to forget his dignity in every other respect, except in that of discharging the obligations it lays upon him, and of humbling himself under the almighty and merciful hand of him who had chosen and exalted him by his grace.

The deputies of the Jews finding that they could hence gather nothing positive or satisfactory to report to the Sanhedrim, urged him to declare in clear terms, who he really was. "They said therefore unto him: who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?" Being thus pressed to give an account of himself, "he said," in a true spirit of humility: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaias said." How admirable is the humility here displayed by the Baptist! He will not have men entertain the least regard for him; but turns their attention entirely from himself, as unworthy to be named or thought of, and only bids them listen to the summons which God sent them by his

mouth. A voice is no more than an empty sound: it is a mere nothing. How eloquent does sincere humility render the saints to express the sentiments of their own nothingness. Like the Baptist, every preacher of God's word must be penetrated with the most feeling sense of his own baseness; must study always to be nothing in his own eyes, whilst yet he exerts all his powers that God, the great All, may be known, loved, served, and glorified by all and in all. He must be himself merely a voice, but a voice of thunder, to awaken in all hearts a profound sense of their spiritual miseries, and of the duties which they owe to God.

"And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: why then dost thou baptise, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor a prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptise in water," in order to induce men to repentance; "but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. He it is that is to come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." Having heard these words, they returned to Jerusalem to report to the great council the result of their inquiries. "These things were done in Bethania,"* otherwise called Bethabara, "beyond the Jordan where John was baptising."

"The next day John saw Jesus coming to him," probably about the time when the lamb was sacrificed in the temple, "and he said" to those near him: "behold the" true "Lamb of God: behold him who taketh away the sin of the world;" behold the only Victim that can purify men from their sins, and reconcile them to God! "This is he of whom I said: after me there cometh a man who is preferred before me, because he was before me. And I knew him not" by his outward appearance, "but" only by revelation when he came to me to be baptised in the Jordan, and that he might be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptising in water," * and preparing all to receive him. "And John gave testimony, saying: I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and he remained upon him. And I knew him not: but he who sent me to baptise in water, said to me: he upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining upon him, he it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. I saw then" that he descended upon Jesus, "and" accordingly "I gave testimony that he is the Son of God," because no other than the Son of God can administer the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

* According to the Greek it is Bethabara, i. e. *the house of passage*, where the Jews perhaps formerly passed over the Jordan, as mentioned Jos. iii. Certain it is that this place is different from Bethania, the dwelling place of Lazarus, which was near to Jerusalem, of which there is frequent mention in the gospel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRST CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST. JOHN I.

The fifth testimony given by St. John in favour of Jesus Christ was on the following day, and in the presence

* Hence it is evident that this must have happened after the baptism and fast of Jesus Christ and therefore he must after his fast, have returned again to the place where John was baptising.

of two of his own disciples; one of whom was Andrew the brother of Simon, who was afterwards named Peter. These various testimonies of the holy precursor, were at first necessary to procure disciples for Jesus, who was yet unknown among the people.

"The next day John was standing again there" at the time of the evening sacrifice, "and two of his disciples: and beholding Jesus walking," he saith, pointing to him; "behold the Lamb of God," behold him who alone is worthy of being immolated, who alone is capable of satisfying the divine justice for the sins of mankind. "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus," being desirous of a further acquaintance with a personage of whom their master had said such wonderful things. "And Jesus turning and seeing them following him, saith to them: what seek you? Who said to him: Rabbi, (which being interpreted is, Master) where dwellest thou? He saith to them: come and see. They came and saw where he abode, and they staid with him that day;* now it was about the tenth hour," or four o'clock in the afternoon. It is the opinion of several Fathers, though not founded on the sacred text, that they spent with Christ the whole night following. "O how happy a day, how happy a night did they pass!" cries out St. Austin; "who will tell us what things they then learned from the mouth of their Saviour" Let us build a dwelling for him in our hearts, to which he may come, and where he may converse with us." This happiness is enjoyed by a soul which opens her affections to God, and receives the rays of his divine light in heavenly contemplation. The joy and comfort, which these two felt in that conversation, are not to be expressed by words; by it they clearly learned that Jesus was the Messias and the Redeemer of the world, and they resolved from that moment to follow him.

"And Andrew the brother of Simon Peter was one of the two who had heard of John" concerning Christ, "and who had followed him." Hence he was the first of his disciples, and is styled by the Greeks the protoclet, or first called. Desirous of imparting to others the infinite treasure which he had discovered, "he findeth, first his brother Simon, and saith to him: we have found the Messias, (which being interpreted is, the Christ.) And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus looking upon him," before either of the brothers had uttered a word, "said" to him: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona," or John; "thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter," i. e. a rock. Christ now begins to form his church, and points out the foundation of it. "Thou shalt be called Peter," i. e. thou shalt be the immovable rock, on which I will build my church.

The Evangelist keeps an exact journal of the various transactions during the seven or eight days after the return of Jesus from the banks of the Jordan, until the time when he wrought his first miracle. This he does, that we may see the prompt and manifest

* It seems they returned home and followed their worldly occupation for some time, until they were called a second time, of which see chap. 26. But though they were not as yet adopted into the family of Christ, nor made his constant attendants, yet they professed themselves his followers, and frequently saw him, and so might easily be spectators of his miracles at the feast of Cana, and on other occasions.

progress of the work of God, and the fruit of St. John Baptist's preparations. "On the following day he would go forth into Galilee," as far as Cana, a town situated at the distance of about ninety miles from Bethabara, where he then was. On his way thither, "he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith to him: follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida,* the city of Andrew and Peter; which the Evangelist remarks, to insinuate to us that they were acquainted with one another, and communicated to each other their mutual happiness. In like manner "Philip findeth Nathaniel," who was of Cana of Galilee, "and saith to him: we have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth." Philip here spoke of the birth of Jesus, according to the common opinion, and it is more than probable that at this time he knew no otherwise. It is most likely, as before observed, that St. Joseph was deceased previous to the commencement of the ministry of Jesus. For as in his discourses he would frequently speak of his Father as of a person then in existence, the Jews would naturally have referred to Joseph, if living, what was meant by Jesus to be referred to his eternal Father; and this ambiguity would continually have taken place in discourses with the Jews, to their no small perplexity and embarrassment. In reality, the evangelical history makes no mention of Joseph during any part of our Saviour's mission. "And Nathaniel," who was well versed in the scriptures, "said to Philip: can there be any good from Nazareth?" not thinking it consistent with the predictions of the prophets that the Messiah, who was to be the son of David, and to be born at Bethlehem, should come from Nazareth. "Philip answered him: come and see," not doubting but, upon his personal acquaintance with the Son of God, he would be as much convinced of the truth as he was himself. Nathaniel complied; and when "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, he saith of him," in his hearing: "behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. Nathaniel saith to him: whence knowest thou me?" To convince Nathaniel that he had received no knowledge of him through the means of Philip, "Jesus answered and said to him; before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* Nathaniel," persuaded that God only, and no other, could have beheld him in this place, "answered him and said: Rabbi, thou art the Son of God;† thou art the King of Israel." Philip had described Jesus unto him as the son of Joseph, and at that period the Trinity of Persons in God had not yet been revealed to the generality of the Jews: it appears therefore that Nathaniel meant only to describe Jesus as the adopted Son of

* There is no mention of this place in the Old Testament, and the reason is, because, as Josephus tells us, it was but a very small village, until improved by Philip the tetrarch, and made a considerable city. Its original name in the Hebrew tongue, imports a place of *fishing* or else *hunting*, and for both these exercises it was very commodiously situated, being in the tribe of Nepthali, a country remarkable for its plenty of deer, (Gen. iv. 21.) and at the north end of the lake of Genesareth, which abounded in fish.

* The particular selection of this circumstance among others equally secret which he might have mentioned, makes it extremely probable that this virtuous Israelite was, at the described moment, employed in prayer, or in some other work equally pleasing to God. Any indifferent action had scarce been deserving the attention or circumstantial description of Jesus.

† It is plain from this and other texts, that the Jews, before the coming of Christ, were convinced that he was to be the Son of God, though they have denied it since that time. For they interpreted as foretold of their Messias, Psalm ii. 7, &c.

God, but by an adoption of a super-excellent kind, and such as was suitable to the dignity of the Messias. The acknowledgment of the divine and natural filiation of Jesus was reserved for St. Peter.* "Jesus congratulating with Nathaniel for thus believing in him, "answered and said to him: because I said to thee I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest: greater things than these thou shalt see," and more convincing proof of his being the Messiah. "And he saith to him: amen, amen I say to you: you shall see the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"† It does not appear from the Gospel at what time this promise was accomplished: St. Chrysostom thinks at Christ's ascension; others refer it to the day of judgment, or to some other occasion. If none of these be deemed satisfactory, it is sufficient to observe, that each particular circumstance of our Saviour's life and actions has not been committed to writing by the sacred Evangelists.

It is observed by the holy Fathers, that our Blessed Saviour, however favourable he might speak of Nathaniel, did not make him one of his apostles,* though seemingly entitled to that distinction, and even qualified to hold the first place. The reason assigned by them is, because he was a man of learning, and well versed in the law. Now Jesus Christ, to confound our pride, would not choose for his apostles such as had human qualifications to recommend them to the esteem of men, lest he might seem to have chosen them on account of their learning and accomplishments; on the contrary, he made choice of those for his preachers, who were evidently unqualified for such a function, that so it might more manifestly appear that the fruit which they produced, was not from themselves, but the effect of his divine grace and truth which spoke in them and by them.

* Matt. xvi. 16.

† To *ascend* and *descend*, to *come* and *go* (according to the Hebrew manner of expression) denotes a free and familiar commerce, and such we may suppose, was the ministry of angels at our Saviour's temptation and agony, at his resurrection and ascension. The words however seem to be a plain allusion to Jacob's ladder, (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13) on the top of which was the divine Majesty, and the angels ascending to receive his commands, and descending to execute them: and therefore others have thought that Christ, by these words, intended to inform his apostles, that the miracles which they should soon see him perform, would declare the divine Majesty with him, and giving him his commands, as clearly and manifestly, as if they had seen the angels of God *ascending* and *descending* upon him, *the Son of Man*. It is observed by several, that only Ezechiel in the old Testament and our Saviour in the New, are called by this name; that our Saviour is never so called but by himself, and that this is the common appellation he gives himself. Ezechiel was probably so called to put him in mind of his mortal condition, though so frequently conversing with heavenly beings; and our Saviour took upon him that title, not only to distinguish his *human* from his *divine* nature, but likewise to express his *humility* and mean condition in taking upon himself the form of a servant. Others however put another construction upon this title, and think that as the term Messiah (which is commonly called Christ) was taken out of Daniel, so this other of the *Son of Man* is taken from thence likewise; for *behold one like the Son of Man*, says the prophet, *came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days*, chap. vii. 13, and that therefore our Saviour did usually call himself so, in allusion to the prophecy, as well as to assert his humanity and declare himself his Father's servant, according to the character given of him by Isaiah, c. xlii. 1. Agreeably to this last exposition, the *Son of Man* (Ben Adam) and the *Sons of Men* (Bene Ish) are said to belong in the scripture language to *princes* and great personages. Thus Psalm iv. 2. *O ye sons of men*, may signify, O ye rulers of the people, Psalm viii. 3. What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man (i. e. the greatest of men.)

* Notwithstanding the authority of the ancient Fathers some modern Greeks pretend to say that Nathaniel is the same as St. Simon or some other apostle. Rupertus, Jansenius, Gavant, F. Stilting the Bollandist, &c. take him to have been the same person with St. Bartholomew, which is not improbable. See Butler's Saints' Lives. St. Epiphanius says, that it was he who accompanied Cleophas going to Emaus the day of Christ's resurrection. The holy Fathers observe, that the apparent contempt of Jesus in not raising him to the apostleship did not discourage or prevent him from assiduously attending on him; which shows his virtue to have been truly humble and sincere. We find him accompanying St. Peter and the other apostles when they went to fish in the sea of Galilee. (John xxi. 2.) Except this particular there is nothing cer-

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHRIST ASSISTS AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST OF CANA. JOHN II.

"AND the third day"* after the calling of Philip and Nathaniel, "there was a marriage† in Cana‡ of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited and his disciples to the marriage." These disciples might be Philip and Nathaniel, Peter and Andrew, and perhaps St. Matthias, Joseph Barsabas, and some few others who had followed our Lord from the time of his baptism by John, (Acts i. 21.) Our Blessed Saviour was pleased to assist at this marriage feast, in order to sanctify, by his presence, the marriage state, of which he is the author and institutor, and on which depends the propagation of mankind. 2. To teach the guests by his example, and, perhaps, by his words, to rejoice with them that rejoiced, with a holy and modest joy in the Lord. "And the wine failing," most probably in consequence of the unexpected arrival of Jesus with his disciples, "the mother of Jesus saith to him: they have no wine." This was a modest suggestion to him on her part, that his known benevolence might remedy an inconvenience arising solely from the arrival of him and his company. As this request, coming from a mother, seemed to lay a command upon the son to grant what was here asked, an immediate compliance with it would perhaps have had too much the appearance of an earthly or human motive for the miracle which he was about to perform, "and," therefore, "Jesus saith to her: woman, what is" that "to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come," perhaps, says St. Chrysostom, because they were not yet sufficiently sensible that wine was wanting. Certain it is, that Jesus designed not this as any personal rebuke to his blameless mother, but merely as a lesson to his disciples, that in the functions of their ministry, they ought to pay no regard to flesh and blood. "His mother was far from considering the answer she received as a refusal; but full of confidence in his benevolence, "saith to the waiters; whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of purification among the Jews, containing each two or three measures." The measure was nearly thirteen quarts, and thus the contents of the whole might be between twenty-five and thirty gallons. "Jesus saith to them: fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them; draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast, and they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the waiters knew who had drawn the waters) the chief steward called the bridegroom,

tain handed down to us concerning him, either in scripture or ecclesiastical history. The Greeks honour him the 22nd of April, and give him the title of Apostle, as they do all the disciples of Christ.

* According to others the *third day* after his departure from Judea for Galilee.

† Nicephorus pretends it was the marriage of Simon surnamed the Cananean, one of the twelve apostles; but this is mere conjecture.

‡ To distinguish it from another town of the same name, mentioned Jos. xix. 28. belonging to the tribe of Asher, not far from the city of Sidon.

and saith to him; every man at first setteth forth good wine: and when they have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.* This was the beginning of the" public "miracles of Jesus which he did in Cana of Galilee; and hereby he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him," i. e. their faith hitherto, perhaps, weak, and founded chiefly on the testimony of St. John, was now augmented and confirmed by seeing this divine miracle.

The different sorts of wine that were produced on this occasion, the one by the bridegroom, and the other by Jesus Christ, mark the different delights of a spiritual and a worldly life. Worldly pleasures seem pleasant to the taste of carnal men; they flatter the senses, they amuse and they entertain while they last, but they last not long; they expire with life, and often leave a bitter emptiness behind them. The pleasures of a spiritual life are sweetened by the grace of Jesus Christ, and convey to the soul an inexpressible satisfaction, a solid and a lasting peace, such as is not to be found in the turbulent joys of sinners. When a devout soul has once begun to taste the sweets of such a peace, she shuts her eyes to those objects which cannot be pursued with innocence; she reposes in the calm of an upright conscience, she keeps her last end constantly in view, she relishes only the things of God, and breathes after an happiness that shall never be exhausted.

We may likewise consider the above miraculous change made by our Lord of water into wine (which was his first miracle) as a prelude to another still more miraculous change, which he made at his last supper, and which he will continue to make by his ministers to the end of the world; I mean the change of bread and wine into his own body and blood.* With this wonderful miracle he daily honors the wedding-feast of his own espousals with our souls, in order to communicate himself to us, and to unite us to himself. By the means of this communication he operates in us another no less wonderful change, by which he transforms us in a manner into himself. The corporal food we take is, by the means of

* This minute detail is recorded, in order to place the truth of the miracle in the clearest light. Considering the many witnesses who must have seen the whole transaction, there could be no deceit or collusion on the part of Jesus and the bridegroom. The failure of the wine was by no means fictitious, but a real, though accidental distress. The parties were probably of the middling class of life, and had only provided so much as they judged would suffice for the number of persons invited, so that seven or eight supernumerary guests easily account for their stock falling short. The Blessed Virgin felt herself interested for the new-married couple, who were probably related to her in blood, and their gratitude for so beneficent a supply may be easily imagined.

The Church celebrates the memory of this miraculous event on the 6th of January, not as if it actually took place on that day, but because she then celebrates the Epiphany or manifestation of Christ to the world by three several mysteries. He was manifested and made known to the wise men of the East by the appearance of a miraculous star: at his baptism he was manifested to the Jews by a voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son:* and third, he was manifested to his disciples at Cana by the miraculous changing of water into wine. Wherefore the Church celebrates the general manifestation of Christ effected by these three miracles, although the two former only, and not the third, happened on that day. The Church indeed sings in her office, *hodie vinum ex aqua factum est ad nuptias;* but as Baronius observes, the meaning only is, *hodie ejus rei memoria agitur.* See likewise Pererius in Joan. c. ii. It is, therefore a mistake of Mr. Baker, when he supposes this to be the tradition of the Church. (See his Treatise on the Feasts.) This event, as the learned Sandinus and Cardinal Gotti observe, might probably take place about the end of February or the beginning of March, about two months after his baptism, which agrees with the gospel account: for according to St. John, ii. 12, 13, after the performance of the above miracle he staid a few days at Capharnaum, and then went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. See Sandinus, *Hist. Familiæ Sacræ*, and Pererius in Joan. c. ii. where he adopts the same opinion.

* What an ancient Father of the Church said, to confirm the faithful of his time in the belief of Christ's real presence in the holy Eucharist, the same we may now say to those Protestants who contest the truth of this sacred mystery. "At Cana of Galilee Jesus effected the transmutation of

our natural heat, daily changed into our flesh and blood; but this spiritual food, like the fire which changes all things into itself, is not changed into our substance, but changes and transforms our souls, as it were into its own nature, to make them one with this bread of life: here by grace, hereafter by glory. Happy those Christians who prepare their hearts for Jesus their heavenly spouse, that he may come and dwell in them to effect this miraculous change, this blessed conversion.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIX.

JESUS DRIVES THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.* THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY TO BE DESTROYED AND RAISED UP AGAIN. JOHN II.

"After this he went down to Capharnaum,* he and his mother, and his brethren and his disciples; and they remained there not many days. And the Passover of the Jews was at hand,† and Jesus went up to Jerusalem," where he was to commence the functions of his high ministry by a great number of miracles. This time was the more suitable for the purpose, as a large concourse of Jews usually assembled there upon this occasion, who would not fail, on their return, to spread far and near the news of the discovery of the Messias. Jesus being arrived at Jerusalem, began his mission by two different kinds of miracles, each of which afforded the strongest proofs of his divinity. The first of these was the effect of his great zeal for the glory of his heavenly Father, and was levelled against the profaners of the house of God; the second was owing to his tender compassion to the infirmities of mankind.

water into wine by the sole act of his will, and can we not believe then that he changed wine into his blood?—Since Christ himself affirms this, and says of the bread: *This is my body*, who after this will dare to doubt of it? And when the same assures us and says: *This is my blood*, who can hesitate and say, it is not his blood? Wherefore, with all certainty and a firm belief, let us receive the body and blood of Christ. For under the form of bread his body is given to thee, and under the form of wine his blood; that having received the body and blood of Christ, thou mayest be made partaker with him of his body and blood. Thus we are made *concorporeal* and *consanguineal* with Christ, by his body and blood being distributed through our bodies. Do not look upon the bread and wine as bare and common elements; for they are the body and blood of Christ, as our Lord assures us. Notwithstanding therefore the suggestions of sense, let faith make thee firm and sure. Judge not of the thing by the taste, but be certain from faith, that thou hast been honoured with the gift of Christ's body and blood, &c." St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. Mystag. 4. p. 292 and 293 ed. Oxon.

* As St. John says that Jesus remained not many days at Capharnaum on the present occasion, we shall not refer to it in the following notes when we speak of his first and second arrival in this town; but shall reckon only from the time when quitting Judea, after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, he made Capharnaum the usual place of his residence.

† This feast is so well known, that we need only remind our reader that from the word *Pasach*, which signifies *to pass or leap over*, the Jews gave the name of Pascha, or Passover, to that great festival which was annually celebrated in commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, because the night before their departure, the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, which were marked with the blood of the lamb, killed the evening before, and for this reason called the Paschal lamb. The feast itself began on the 14th day of Nisan, which is the first month in their sacred year, but the seventh in their civil year; and answers, in part, to our March and April; but as the Jews began their days at six in the evening, this feast was to continue seven days complete, and so ended on the 21st in the evening.

* He did the same at the conclusion of his ministry. See chap. 110. on Matt. xxi.

On his arrival at Jerusalem, he went straight to the holy place, and he found in the first court* of "the temple them that sold oxen and sheep, and doves," for the sacrifices, "and the changers of money† sitting" at their desks, in order to facilitate the payments made between the various Jews coming from distant parts. It is extremely probable, that the priests allowed the traders to bring their several commodities into this court, in order to dispose of them to such persons as wished to offer sacrifice, and that by such connivance they reaped no small pecuniary advantage. The zeal of Jesus was inflamed at the sight of this profanation, "and when he had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the temple: the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers he poured out, and the tables he overthrew." This was a miracle truly divine, and effected by the majestic display of the divinity shining in his countenance. "And to them that sold doves he said: take these things hence, and make not the house of my Father a house of traffic. And his disciples remembered that it was written," Ps. lxvii. "the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up. The Jews therefore," greatly irritated at this conduct, "answered and said to him: what sign dost thou show unto us, seeing thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said to them: Destroy this temple," * and I will do a miracle which will show by what authority I have acted, for "in three days I will raise it up again. The Jews then said: six and forty years† was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body," the true temple of the Divinity, which was to be raised up by a glorious resurrection; a greater miracle than would have been the rebuilding of the material temple in three days. "When therefore he was risen again from the dead, his disciples," who were now equally in the dark as to this mysterious rebuilding of the temple, "remembered he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had said;" being thoroughly convinced that his rising from the dead on the third day, was the accomplishment of

* There were three courts belonging to the temple. The court of the priests, where the altar of *incense* stood; the court of the Israelites, where the Jews that were clean and the *proselytes of justice*, i. e. those who had embraced circumcision and the law of Moses, met at their devotion; and the *court* of the Gentiles, where the unclean Jews, and the Gentiles who owned the true God, without professing Judaism, were permitted to worship. Now under the pretext of having the sacrifices near at hand, the priests, for their own profit, had permitted beasts and poultry to be brought within this court, and graziers and hucksters to mix with the people at their devotions.

† *Money-changers.* It was an appointment of the law, that every man, from twenty years old and upwards, should annually pay into the treasury of the temple, in order to defray the expenses of the *daily* sacrifices, the sum of half a shekel, (Exod. xxx. 12, 15.) This and the voluntary oblations of the people of all ranks occasioned a necessity of changing greater coin into less, and very often of foreign coin into that which was current in the nation. Under the pretence therefore of having things near at hand, the priests took the opportunity to gratify their covetousness, by letting out places to money-changers, who, to make up their rent, (which was likely exhorbitant) might extort from those that came to them, or as Origen imagines, give them *argyrion adokimon, base money*, instead of good, and so made the temple *a den of thieves*.

* The Jews had a maxim, or proverbial saying, that the *Sanctuary of Sanctuaries* was the Messiah, therefore there could be no impropriety in our Saviour's calling his body a temple; for if the Apostle calls our bodies the *temple of God*, as he does, 1. Cor. iii. 16. and 2. Cor. vi. 16. how much more does that title belong to the body of Christ, in which the *fulness of the Godhead dwelt* always and inseparably?

† From Herod's beginning to rebuild the temple, to this first passover after our Saviour's baptism, it is agreed that the time was exactly six and forty years: yet Josephus, Antiquities, l. 15. c. 14. tells us that the whole was finished in nine years and a half. But this is to be understood of the main building only, since, according to the same author, l. 20. c. 8. several new works and decorations were still carrying on, and eighteen thousand men employed, even to the time that young Agrippa was made king of Judea, which was about the sixtieth year of the Christian æra. Calmet.

the prophecy, and that both his resurrection and the prediction of it were confirmed by the scriptures.

The preceding history exhibits a signal proof of the zeal of Jesus for the glory of his Father, and is the first circumstance attending the commencement of his mission at Jerusalem. This was succeded by numerous miracles which he wrought out of compassion for those who were sick. Of these miracles neither St. John nor the other Evangelists have given us the detail. "Now when he was at Jerusalem at the passover, upon the festival day, many believed in his name, seeing the miracles, which he wrought. But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men," and saw clearly the inconstancy of their faith, and the evil disposition of their hearts, "and because he needed not that any should give testimony of man, for he knew what was in man." This penetrating knowledge he had of men's hearts and dispositions did not allow him, on this occasion, to trust either his secrets or his person to them, nor to prolong his stay at Jerusalem, the time not being yet come when he was to die for the redemption of the world.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DISCOURSE BETWEEN JESUS AND NICODEMUS. JOHN III.

"AND there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night." The principal reason of this cautious conduct was the apprehension of drawing upon himself the resentment of the Priests and Pharisees, who had conceived the bitterest hatred against Jesus for expelling the buyers and sellers out of the temple, though authorised by them in the illicit use of that sacred place. A further reason was the desire of saving his own reputation in the eyes of the public. He sought from Jesus an explanation of such points of doctrine as he had not perfectly understood: now to be seen asking questions, and receiving explanations from so young a master, would have been too humiliating a trial for a person of his rank, and therefore he chose a time when no one could be privy to the consultation.

The subject of this interview between Jesus and Nicodemus, relates to the first elements of the Christian religion, which the latter wished to learn. He introduced the discourse, and addressing Jesus, "said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God: for no man can do these signs * which thou dost, unless God be with him." Tell me therefore, I beseech thee, what I must do to be saved. "Jesus answered," by showing to Nicodemus the necessity of a second birth, "and said to him: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith to him: how can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into

* Hence it appears that Jesus wrought many miracles, even the first year of his preaching, though not very publicly and amidst the crowd. However, few of those which he performed in Judea are noticed by the Evangelists, as was before observed.

his mother's womb, and be born again? Jesus answered: Amen, amen I say to thee; unless a man be born again" by the baptism "of water and" by the grace of "the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* Our first birth, by which our bodies are produced, is all carnal; for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" on the contrary, the second birth of man is all spiritual, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," since every production partakes of the qualities of that by which it is produced. "Wonder not that I said to thee, you must be born again." This is to be understood of that spiritual birth which alone can fit us for the kingdom of heaven. As to the manner of this spiritual birth, it is as hidden as the operations of the Spirit of God. "The Spirit breatheth where he will,† and thou hearest his voice" from the mouth of his ministers; "but thou knowest not whence he cometh, and whither he goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The effects produced in him by the holy Spirit plainly show a great change in him, and he himself perceives it; but these operations of the Spirit are not perceptible to others: they see not the inward principle that makes him act, nor the end to which he tends, nor the goods which are the objects of his hope.

"Nicodemus answered and said to him: how can these things be done? Jesus answered and said to him: art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things,"* so clearly signified by the law; the perfection of which consists in the interior renewing of the soul by the grace of the Holy Ghost? "Amen, amen I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things," by having recourse to corporeal images, "and you believe not; how will you believe if I speak to you heavenly things," and in a language suited to their sublime and celestial nature? In other words, if you understand not when I speak of baptism given by water in a visible manner, how will you comprehend greater mysteries, such as my descent from heaven and my abode still there? And yet no other person can inform you of these heavenly things; for "no man hath ascended into heaven" to learn them "but he that descended from heaven," i. e. "the Son of Man," who being likewise the Son of God, "is" always "in heaven.† And "yet as

* *Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost.* Though the word *holy* be now wanting in all Greek copies, it is certainly the sense. The ancient Fathers, and particularly St. Austin, prove from these words, the necessity of giving baptism to infants; and by Christ's adding *water* is excluded a metaphorical baptism. See also Acts viii. 36. Acts x. 47, and Titus iii. 5.

† *The Spirit breatheth where he will.* The Protestant translation has *the wind*; and so it is expounded by St. Chrysostom and St. Cyril on this verse; as if Christ compared the motions of the Holy Ghost to *the wind*, of which men can give so little account, whence it comes and whither it goes. Yet many others, as St. Austin, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, understand this expression of the Holy Ghost, of whom it can be properly said, that *he breatheth where he will.*

* Many passages both in the law and the prophets implied this doctrine of *regeneration*; for what else can be the meaning of the *circumcision of the heart* commanded by Moses, Deut. x. 16., of the *renewal of a clean* and *right spirit* prayed for by David, Ps. l., of God's giving his people a *new heart* and a *new spirit*, Ezech. xxxvi. 26. &c.; but the Pharisees being taken up with their rites and traditions, paid little attention to spiritual things of much greater consequence.

† *No one hath ascended..but he that descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.* These words repeated at different times by our Saviour, in their literal and obvious sense, show that Christ was in heaven, and had a being before he was born of the Virgin Mary, against the Cerinthians and others; that he descended from heaven; that when he was made man and conversed with men on earth, he was at the same time in heaven. Some Socinians here give us their groundless fancy, that Jesus after his baptism took a journey to heaven, and returned again before his

great as the Son of Man is, he must die for the sins of men; for "as Moses lifted up the" brazen "serpent in the desert," that they who were bitten by the fiery serpents, might behold it, and so be cured, "so must the Son of Man be lifted up," and fastened to the cross, "that whosoever believeth in him," by a faith working by charity, "may not perish, but may have life everlasting.* For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son" † to be immolated on the cross, "that whosoever believeth in him," as the victim of propitiation for sin, "may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge" and condemn "the world, but that the world might be saved by him. He that believeth in him" with a lively active faith, "is not judged; but he that doth not believe, is already judged" and condemned, by being obstinate in his incredulity, and retrenching himself from the society of Christ and his church. "And this is the judgment," or cause of his condemnation, "because the light is come into the world" to teach men the ways of justice and salvation, "and" yet "men loved darkness rather than light; for their works were evil." They were necessarily to make their choice between the pursuit of their former corrupt ways and the light which condemned them; but being attached both by affection and habit to sin, they had not the resolution to break their chains, and to follow the light thus held out to them; and by thus giving the preference to their state of darkness, they have become even more obdurate in evil than before, with a more determined hatred of that truth which censured their conduct. "For every one that doth evil, hateth the light" which exposes his crimes, "and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved," Nothing is therefore more equitable than this judgment of the Almighty against mankind, they may avoid it by the means placed within their power; which if they refuse, they can, in reason, blame none but themselves. "But," on the contrary, "he that doth truth," i. e. what truth and justice prescribe, "cometh to the light;" and so far from flying from it, he examines daily all his actions by the bright light of the Christian faith, "because they are done in God," and are ever conformable to his holy law.

It appears from this text, that among the many Jews who heard the several discourses of Jesus Christ, those only in general believed in him, who were persons of good morals, such as Nicodemus in the present instance: I say, generally speaking, because there were doubtless, many exceptions. Nicodemus was sincere in his search after truth: he found it, and embraced it. A fear of what the world would say,

death. Nor yet would this make him in heaven, when he spoke this to his disciples.

* The several comparisons here drawn are, 1, Between a serpent perfectly harmless and without poison (the brazen serpent) and sanctity itself clothed with the outward appearance of sin. 2. Between the Hebrews bitten by the fiery serpents, and all mankind spiritually wounded unto death by the devil, the ancient serpent that induced our first parents to transgress the commands of God. 3. Between the look which the wounded Hebrews directed towards the brazen serpent, and the look of an active faith replete with love and confidence which the faithful direct towards Jesus Christ. And 4. Between the cure of such as were wounded by the fiery serpents, and the deliverance or salvation of mankind.

† He was then *his Son, his only begotten Son,* before he sent him into the world. He was not therefore his Son only by the incarnation, but was his Son from the beginning, as he was also his *Word* from all eternity. This was the constant doctrine of the Church and of the Fathers against the heresy of the Arians, that *God was always Father,* and the Son always the *eternal* Son of the eternal Father. See chap. 1.

made him ashamed at first of appearing in the company of Jesus Christ by day; he came therefore to consult him by night. However, he had the courage afterwards not only to declare himself publicly, but also to plead for his divine Master before the council, and to express his disapprobation of the bloody sentence which condemned him to the cross. Nor did he relent either in his courage or in his love for Jesus, after the ignominy of his passion; he assisted Joseph of Arimathea in taking down the sacred body from the cross; he helped to embalm and lay it in the sepulchre. From these progressive steps, which Nicodemus made in the way of virtue, the holy Fathers take occasion to say, that we are not immediately to despair of those timid souls, who dare not at first declare themselves in favour of the truth. Great allowances must be made for human weakness; we must know how to counsel the doubtful, and commiserate the feeble. Reflection, perchance, may dissipate their fears, and give them courage: in secret silence they may consider the eternal truths, the grace of God may at the same time work within their souls and inspire them with fortitude, so that they no longer fear or blush to show themselves in the cause of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SIXTH TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN FAVOUR OF JESUS CHRIST. JOHN III.

"AFTER these things" were done at Jerusalem, "Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea," * not far from the place were John was staying, "and there he abode with them; and" by them "baptized" all such as resorted to him for that purpose. It is extremely uncertain under what form of words he and his disciples conferred baptism, at a time when the mystery of the Trinity was not expressly revealed.† "And John also was baptizing in Ennon near Salem, because there was much water there," which shows that he baptized by immersion; "and they came and were baptized. For John was not as yet cast into prison." The Evangelist makes this remark, because, as the other three Evangelists had omitted in their Gospels to mention the particular actions of Jesus, between the time of his fasting in the desert and the imprisonment of his precursor, St. John's recital of the many transactions of Jesus in Judea during that interval, might otherwise have appeared contradictory to their narrative. This imprisonment of the holy precursor was the conclusion of his mission. Until that event he had continued without interruption to baptize, although Jesus was likewise baptizing; but his object was solely that of gaining to his divine Master, not only those who had hitherto ranked among his own disciples, but also such others as might be induced to listen to his exhortations.

"And there arose a question between

* There is no mention in the Gospel of the particular place where our Saviour began his baptism, but we may presume, that he would open the first scene of his office where his faithful forerunner had given such glorious and advantageous testimonies in his favour, John's baptism of *repentance for sins*, which was preparatory to his coming, was to be succeeded by the *baptism of remission* of sins, which Jesus alone had power to give. Calmet.

† See Matt. xvi.

some of John's disciples and the Jews" who followed Jesus, "concerning the purification" or baptism of Christ, and that of St. John, which of the two was the better. The Jews gave the preference to the baptism of Jesus, and the disciples of John to that of their master. "And they came to John and said to him: Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold he baptizeth, and all men come to him." This statement plainly implied a wish on their part, that John would declare his sentiments; and although they did not openly express this, he so far understood their meaning, as to see clearly that they sought to extort from him a condemnation of the baptism of Jesus, with a censure as well of the person conferring it, as of those who received it at his hands. Almighty God permitted this dispute and this kind of jealousy in the disciples of St. John, in order to give him an occasion of delivering the following excellent instruction. Wherefore "John answered, and said: A man cannot receive any thing unless it be given him from heaven," and therefore you may presume that it is God alone who gives him this great number of disciples. The death of self-love and of our own exaltation is implied in this admirable rule which he here lays down as the foundation of what he had to observe. Our own self-love, independently of every thing else, and at whatever price it may be, thinks only of self and of our own greatness; but the love of God, being always humble, measures every thing by the will of God, and seeks no elevation but inasmuch as God wills it: every other elevation becomes not only suspicious, but even abominable to a soul penetrated with divine love. It is on this foundation St. John proceeds.

"You yourselves do bear witness, that I said: I am not the Christ; but that I am sent before him" to dispose men in his favour: I ought therefore to rejoice that all go to him. For "he that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom who standeth near and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled" by the glory of his miracles, the splendour of his name, and the wonderful things reported of him. St. John here describes Jesus Christ under a new character, the most tender and affectionate of all, viz. that of the Bridegroom. In effect, by his incarnation he espoused our human nature, which was totally foreign to him: he has made it one with himself; he has espoused his holy Church, as an immortal Spouse that has neither spot nor wrinkle:—he has espoused to himself holy souls, whom he loads with gifts in the enjoyment of chaste delights: giving them not only all that he has, but all that he is: his soul, his body, his divinity: and preparing for them hereafter an union incomparably greater and more divine. Such is the character of Jesus Christ given us by St. John: he is the Bridegroom ever tender and affectionate, who shows his love by unheard of effects. And what is the character of John? He is the friend of the Bridegroom who hears his voice with joy; i. e. not merely his words, but also his wide spreading fame, the account of his many miracles and preaching, and the universal astonishment of all who had heard of his

extraordinary actions. Such ought to be the joy of every Christian in hearing the voice of Jesus; for this voice we may still hear in his gospel; and interiorly at the bottom of our heart by those graces and inspirations which he communicates to our souls.

But let us listen to St. John, who thus continued his discourse in favour of his beloved bridegroom: "He must increase" and rise more and more in eminence, not as to his person, for he is as great and eminent as he ever can be; but by the glory of his miracles, by the concourse of his disciples, by the extent of his fame, by the conversion of nations to his faith, and by the display of that omnipotence which heaven and earth obey: "but I" on the contrary, "must decrease," and return into the obscurity of my nothingness. "He that cometh from above is above all," and consequently infinitely above me. "He that is of the earth" as I am, "of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh," i.e. he is earthly in his nature, in his various qualities, in his habits of thinking, in his mode of reasoning and expressing himself. "He that cometh from heaven," as does Jesus Christ, he "is above all. And what he hath seen and heard" in heaven "that he testifieth, and" yet "no man," comparatively speaking, "receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony, hath attested by his seal, that God is true," and hath executed his promises concerning the Messias. "For he whom God hath sent" upon earth in the person of Jesus, "speaketh the words of God: for God doth not give" to him "the spirit by measure," as formerly to the prophets; but he communicates to him the whole fulness thereof as to his own Son; for "the Father loveth the Son" with an infinite love. "And he hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting" in hope, though not in possession; but he that believeth not the Son, and is incredulous to his doctrine, or disobedient to his precepts, "shall not see life everlasting, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

This is the last of the several testimonies which John gave in favour of Jesus Christ, subsequent to which we place his imprisonment, an event which caused Jesus to quit Judea, and to retire into Galilee.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE IMPRISONMENT OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.* MATT. XIV. MARK VI. LUKE III.

JOHN the Baptist had filled all Judea with admiration at the holiness of his life and doctrine: "but Herod the tetrarch, when he was reproved by him on account of" his living in the state of adultery with "Herodias, his brother Philip's* wife, and of all the evil things

* We place here the imprisonment of St. John, which St. Luke anticipates, and which St. Matthew and St. Mark join to his decollation. It is probable that this event took place immediately before Jesus quitted Judea, as his departure is immediately subjoined to it by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John.

* We find the same name of Philip in the Greek of St. Matthew and St. Mark; but he is a different person from Philip the tetrarch mentioned by St. Luke, iii. 1. He was likewise son of Herod the Great by Mariamne, daughter of Simon the high-priest Josephus calls him Herod, which

which Herod did, also added this to all the rest, that he sent and apprehended John and bound him, and put him into prison" in the fortress of Macherus, two leagues beyond the lake Asphaltites upon the borders of Arabia Petrea, as Josephus informs us. Herod thus persecuted the servant of God, not merely on his own account, but chiefly for "the sake of Herodias."* But "John," with an intrepid zeal, "said to Herod: it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife," Levit. xvi. 18. "And when he would have put him to death, he feared the people, because they esteemed him as a prophet. Now Herodias laid snares for him: and was" very "desirous to put him to death, and could not" at this time succeed in her sanguinary purpose. "For Herod," though exasperated at his censures, yet "feared John, knowing him to be a just and a holy man: and he kept him"* out of respect, "and having heard him, did many things" by his advice "and gave ear to him willingly." We are therefore to consider the tyrant as agitated by sentiments of the most opposite nature; sometimes respecting John as a saint, at other times hating him as a censor; so that he found a violent struggle in his own breast, between his veneration for the sanctity of the prophet, and the reproaches of his own conduct; to which must be added the clamours and artifices of Herodias, who left nothing unattempted to take away the life of him who dared to impeach her conduct, and disturb her criminal pleasures and ambition. It is by this easy interpretation that the apparent contradiction of St. Matthew and St. Mark, respecting the different dispositions of Herod, may be easily reconciled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JESUS LEAVES JUDEA† HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.
MATT. IV. MARK I. JOHN IV.

"WHEN Jesus therefore understood that John was delivered up" by the command of Herod, he determined to enter more publicly on his sacred mission: for what he had occasionally hitherto done in Judea, seems to have been rather a prelude to prepare the minds of men to receive him, when he should formally undertake the great office of the promised Messias. Wherefore being about to occupy the place of his forerunner St. John, he chose Gallilee for the first scene of his mission, that being the place assigned him by the ancient prophets.

shows that he must have had two names as well as this Herod who put John the Baptist to death, and who was likewise called Antipater or Antipas. See chap. 13. Note p. 155.

* Josephus mentions another reason for confining John the Baptist, viz. the fear of Herod, lest the Baptist by an improper use of the great credit and authority which he had obtained among the Jews might raise sedition, and cause a revolution in the state. It seems probable that the Pharisees out of envy, had suggested this reason to Herod, and therefore they had a great share in his imprisonment. In effect his death is attributed to them by Jesus Christ himself. See chap. 67.

† St. Matthew and St. John seem to assign different reasons why Jesus retired into Galilee; but they agree in this, that it was lest his presence might irritate the Pharisees, who had already prevailed with Herod to arrest St. John Baptist, and who saw that Jesus attracted a still greater number of disciples than his precursor. Hence we cannot doubt that the Evangelists speak of the one and same departure of our Lord out of Judea.

* *Syneterei auton*, custodiebat eum. The Protestant translation has, *he observed him.*



Christ and the Woman of Samaria.

A second reason mentioned by St. John for his retiring into Galilee, was a motive of consummate prudence; for he was well aware of the jealousy of the Pharisees, who "had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples, and baptizeth more than John, (though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples," whom he commissioned to perform that sacred rite, whilst he himself was entirely employed in preaching,) wherefore he left "Judea and departed again into Galilee," * in order to remove from the eyes of the jealous Pharisees, a sight so disagreeable to their feelings as was that of the rapid progress of his doctrine, and the increasing number of his followers; a sight which, in the ordinary course of things, would otherwise have brought down upon him their steady vengeance, before the time ordained by Providence for the final period of his mission.

"And" in his way to Galilee, "he was of necessity to pass through Samaria.† He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria which is called Sichar,‡ near the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph," at the distance of thirty-six miles from Jerusalem, and the same place as Sichem, mentioned in Genesis xxxiv. "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat just by the well. It was about the sixth hour," which answers to mid-day. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink, (for his disciples were gone into the city to buy food.") But in making this request, his true motive was to introduce the following conversation with her, which he designed for the good of her soul. "Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou being a Jew, ask me to drink who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. * Jesus answered and said to her: if thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." By this gift of living water we are to understand the Holy Ghost, who quenches in our souls the thirst of sensual pleasures and of perishable goods, extinguishes the burnings of concupiscence, waters the dryness of the heart by sentiments of piety, and renders the soul fruitful in all kinds of good works. This is truly a living water, both in itself and its effects, since the Holy Ghost being life, gives life to all such souls as are so happy as to receive him. "The woman," understanding

* It may seem surprising that Jesus should retire to Galilee, which was under the dominion of Herod. But Josephus (l. 18. c. 3. of his Antiquities) removes this difficulty by observing, that the most maritime part of Galilee, where was Bethsaida and Capharnaum, did not belong to Herod, but to his brother Philip, and it was to this part Jesus retired, as the Gospel informs us.

† Samaria is a province of Palestine, so called from the city of the same name, that was once the capitol of the kingdom of Israel. It lies exactly between Judea to the south, and Galilee to the north, and extends itself from the Mediterranean Sea westward, to the river Jordan eastward, taking up the most considerable part of what formerly belonged to the tribe of Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasses on the west side of Jordan.

‡ Sichar or Sichem was the capital of the country once called Samaria. At present it is called *Naplosa*, and stands in a narrow valley, between Mount Garizim on the south, (at the foot of which it is situated) and Ebal on the north. On Mount Garizim they had once a temple which seemed to rival that of Jerusalem, but in the time of the Maccabees it was destroyed by Hyrcanus.

* The chief reasons of this hatred against the Samaritans, were these three: 1. The foreign extraction of the Samaritans, who were chiefly descended from the Cutheans, whom Salmanasar sent to Samaria when he carried away the ten tribes into captivity. 2 Kings xvi. 9. 2. The difference of their religion and worship; as that of the Samaritans was a kind of mixture of Jewish and Pagan rites. 3. The rival temple which the Samaritans had built on Mount Garizim,

him literally of the water that was in the well, "saith to him, Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou living water? Art thou greater than our Father Jacob who gave us the well, and he drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle. Jesus answered, and said to her," that the water he spoke of differed from other waters, and was infinitely more excellent: "Whosoever drinketh of this" common "water," says he, "shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever. But the water which I shall give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life everlasting."

Thus it is with all the goods of this world, of which the waters we drink are an emblem or figure. They more properly excite in us fresh desires, which are the thirst of the soul, than satiate us, since the satisfaction they bring us is only momentary. On the contrary, he who drinks of the water which Jesus offers, will never more suffer thirst. For the effusion of the Holy Ghost, in which consists the justice of this life, is the commencement of that justice and perfection which in heaven will diffuse glory on the blessed, and abundantly satisfy all their desires. And thus the waters which Jesus is willing to bestow, is of that nature, as to become in him who drinks of it, a fountain or spring of living water which shall never cease to flow, and which, according to the nature of all water, rising up to the level of its source, will spring up to eternal life, whence it draws its origin. Now how can they be thirsty who carry in their bosom a never-ceasing spring of living water?

"The woman," beginning now to understand that Jesus was speaking of a water far more excellent than such as we are accustomed to, "saith to him: Give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw. Jesus," judging it unnecessary to add any further explanation upon a subject she was not yet capable of understanding, "saith to her: Go call thy husband and come hither." And this he said with the view of rebuking her for her wicked course of life, and of bringing her to repentance, which was a necessary condition for her receiving that divine water of grace of which he had been speaking. "The woman answered and said: I have no husband," which was truly said; for the man who had her, was either the husband of another woman, or lived with her in concubinage, though vulgarly reputed to be her husband. "Hence Jesus replied; thou hast said well: I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands,* and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband: this thou hast said truly. The woman saith to him: Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet," for he had discovered to her such circumstances of her past and present life as a stranger must naturally have been ignorant of. However, without taking offence at what Jesus had told her, she wished to profit of the present opportunity, and

and consecrated to Jupiter Olympus, in order to avoid the persecution of Antiochus. Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 7.

* But whether five successively and after the death of one another, or five from whom she had been divorced for adultery, is not agreed. The greater part of modern interpreters, however, judge that she had been successively married to five several men, but yet behaved herself so ill towards them, that for her adultery or some other improper behaviour, they had given her a bill of divorce. This seems more likely than that, after the death of five legal husbands she should live in an illicit commerce with a sixth person.

proposed to him as a prophet a question which at that time was a subject of great dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans.* It regarded the right place of offering sacrifice. "Our Fathers," said she, "adored on this mountain: but you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore." She speaks of offering sacrifice; for simple or mere adoration was never restrained to any particular place: her arguments tended to show that, as Abraham, Jacob, and the ancient Patriarchs adored God on Mount Garizim, which she pointed to, near Sichar, and upon which the Samaritans had recently rebuilt the temple formerly erected by Manasses, and lately destroyed by John Hyrcanus, so it was unreasonable and unjustifiable in the Jews to pretend, contrary to the example and authority of their forefathers, that the only place, where sacrifice was to be offered, was within the walls of Jerusalem.

It was agreed upon by each party, that sacrifice should only be offered up in that place which the Lord had chosen, as prescribed in Deut. xii. 14, 16. But the difficulty consisted in ascertaining which of the two temples, viz. of Jerusalem, or of Garizim, had been the object of God's choice. It is however incontestably true, that he had chosen the temple of Jerusalem, 3 Kings ix. 3. 2. Paralip, xvii. 12. But the Samaritans admitted not this authority, having rejected all the books of the scripture, except the Pentateuch of Moses.

"Jesus" condescended to rectify what the woman had erroneously inferred, and "saith to her: Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem" only "adore the Father." In the mean time, "you," Samaritans, "adore that which you know not," having by your superstitions corrupted the true worship of God; but we Jews adore that which we know," viz. the only true God, and in such a manner as he himself prescribed by his servant Moses. "For salvation is of the Jews," the true Messias being promised to them. "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers," i. e. Christians, "shall adore the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to adore him. God is a spirit, and they who adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth," without being confined to any one temple or place; and chiefly in spirit, without such a multitude of sacrifices and ceremonies as the Jews practised.

This adoration in spirit may be understood as referring to that adoration which is peculiar to the new law, in opposition to the old law of Moses, which was carnal in its sacrifices, its ceremonies, its precepts, and its promises; whereas the new law, whilst it possesses something exterior in the object of its worship, viz. the sacrament of the Eucharist, and in the ceremonies accompanying this sacrifice, is yet interior and spiritual both in the one and the other. In the object of its worship, for this is Jesus Christ hidden under the appearances of bread and wine;

* Josephus in his Antiquities, l. 13. c. 6., gives us the history of a warm dispute between the Jews and Samaritans concerning the schismatical temple at Garizim and the true temple at Jerusalem. Both parties referred themselves to the arbitration of King Ptolemy Philometer, who gave judgment in favour of the Jews upon their stating the *antiquity of their temple*, the *uninterrupted succession of the priesthood* officiating there throughout all ages, besides other arguments of the like nature. In this controversy between the Jews and Samaritans the intelligent reader will observe some resemblance to that which subsists between Catholics and Protestants. See Dr. Kellison's Survey of the New Religion, p. 129.

and in the concomitant circumstances of it, for these are acts of faith, adoration, hope, and love, victims totally of a spiritual nature.

This adoration in truth we may likewise consider as put equally in opposition to those shadows and figures, which constituted the essential part of the old law, as well as to the superstitious errors which prevailed in the worship of the Samaritans. Or, perhaps, this adoration in spirit and truth, may be considered as merely signifying that sincerity wherewith a soul adores her God with all her heart, without hypocrisy and disguise.

"The" Samaritan "woman" not understanding this sublime theological discourse of Jesus, "saith to him," suspecting him perhaps to be the Messias: "I know that the Messias cometh, (who is called Christ) therefore when he is come he will tell us all things" necessary to be known by mankind. "Jesus saith to her: I am he who am speaking with thee: and presently his disciples came" with such provisions as they had procured, "and they wondered that he talked with the woman" contrary to his usual practice, "yet no one said what seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her? The woman therefore," now fully convinced of his being the Messias, "left her waterpots," with all haste, "and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there: Come and see a man who hath told me all things that ever I did. Is not he the Christ; They went therefore out of the city, and were coming to him. In the mean time," as Jesus did not seem disposed to partake in the provisions brought him, "the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi, eat. But he saith to them: I have food to eat, which you know not," alluding to the conversion of the Samaritans, which he hungered and thirsted after more than his corporal food. "The disciples therefore" understanding him in a literal sense, "said to one another: hath any one brought him to eat? Jesus saith to them: my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work:" which was to procure the salvation of souls by such means as his Father had pointed out, and principally by his preaching and doctrine. He further exhorted his disciples to the same function, by stating to them, that a large field was now open to their zeal, and that therefore they were not to say, as was usual with sluggish people, that there were four months between the seed time and the harvest. "Do you not say," said he, "there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh. Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are quite ready for the harvest:" and at the same time he probably pointed at the adjacent country which was ready for the sickle, and an emblem or figure of the spiritual harvest of the numberless souls who were prepared to receive the faith; a specimen of whom they now beheld in the crowd of persons flocking to them out of Sichar.

He urged them to work earnestly in this harvest, by exhibiting to their view the recompence which they had to expect. For as the reaper is entitled to his wages, so would the reaper of souls be undoubtedly entitled to receive the reward of eternal life; to which should be added, the further recompence arising from the joy and

satisfaction of gaining to God so many souls as would be converted by means of their preaching and apostolic labours. "And he that reapeth," says he, "receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true: that it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth: I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour: others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours." He alludes to the ancient patriarchs and prophets, who had laboured with great earnestness to instil into mankind the first principles of faith, the knowledge of the true God, and the hope of the Messias, who was to come, whilst his disciples, whom he now sent to baptize, did no more than reap, as it were the crop of that land, which had neither been tilled nor sown by them.

"Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: that he told me whatsoever I have done. So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired him that he would stay there; and he abode there two days," preaching the gospel himself, whilst his disciples administered baptism. "And many more believed in him, because of his words. And they said to the woman: we now believe not for thy saying," but from personal conviction; "for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."*

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS IN GALILEE.—THE FAME OF HIS PREACHING IS SPREAD ABROAD.
MATT. IV. MARK I. LUKE IV. JOHN IV.

"Now after two days" stay in Sichar, "he departed thence, and leaving the holy city Nazareth," * where he had lived so many years, he made Capharnaum the chief place of his residence. "For Jesus himself gave testimony,† that a prophet has no honour in his own country," because the people who know his birth and education, are generally prone to envy him any superiority over them. Wherefore "Jesus came, and returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee," i. e. he made it appear by many evident and miraculous proofs, that the power and virtue of the Holy Ghost was with him, and that he was the promised Messiah; for hitherto he had been, as

* Not that Jesus, on this occasion, had entered Nazareth and now quitted it; for by his leaving the city (relicta civitate) we are only to understand that he passed it by, without revisiting a place where he had spent so many of his early years.

† John gives the reason why Jesus did not go to Nazareth, alleging his Master's own word: however this *testimony* of Jesus was not given by him until a considerable time afterwards at Nazareth, Matt. xiii. 57. Hence it appears that St. Matthew and St. John speak of the same arrival of Jesus in Galilee.

* It is very probable that this transaction happened about the harvest time, as Jesus appears to have drawn from the circumstances peculiar to this season the instructions which he gave to his disciples. Every thing considered, no longer space of time than the interval between the time of Easter and that of Pentecost, which last was about the harvest time, can be assigned to the event which took place between the last mentioned Passover and those which are here recorded. Those interpreters who with A. Lapide, understand in a literal sense the four months mentioned in the proverb, and who place this journey in the months of December or January, viz. in the depth of winter, do not reflect, that at that season, the request he made to the Samaritan woman for water to allay his thirst, would not have been so seasonable as in the more sultry months of the year.

it were, concealed, and had not manifested that plenitude of power of which he was possessed. "And when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him" with great honour and joy, "having seen all the things he had done at Jerusalem on the festival day, for they also went to the festival day," as appointed by the law. "From that time Jesus began to preach the Gospel * of the kingdom of God, and to say," as John his precursor had already done: "the time is accomplished and the kingdom of God is at hand: do penance and believe the Gospel, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And the fame of him† went out through the whole country: and he taught in their synagogues,‡ and was magnified by all."

We are now to consider Jesus Christ as beginning to exercise the office of a divine instructor. Being the eternal word of God, he is, indeed, of his own nature, the immediate teacher of all men: because being truth and wisdom, this truth and wisdom ought to be united to our minds, that we may know and love it, in which consists the reformation of man. However as it is the nature of man, at least in his present fallen state, that the knowledge of spiritual truths should be preceded by an external instruction which strikes the senses, God, as St. Paul observes, Heb. i. 1. made use of prophets in the old law for this purpose; but these prophets being only men, obscured in some degree the interior instruction of the word upon the soul. Men believed that they had learned from man what they could only learn from God himself: wherefore the eternal word and Son of God was willing himself in person to exercise the office of a teacher, and this not only internally, but also in an external manner. This he did by becoming man, and by preaching visibly and efficaciously to men the truths of salvation. The words that he spoke to them, and which he caused afterwards to be written in his Gospel, were the divine channels through which he has communicated his truths to mankind. And as he spoke not only for the benefit of his contemporaries, but likewise of all succeeding generations, the faithful of all ages ought to regard these his words as full of grace, and to receive Jesus Christ for their teacher in whatever manner he is pleased to instruct them: not only by opening their hearts to his truths, but also by pursuing the method he has chosen to communicate these truths, which is by attentively giving ear to the words of the gospel promulgated by him for the instruction of mankind.

Jesus Christ we may observe, did not, like other men, prepare himself

* Christ began his public preaching in the thirty-first year of his age. Florintinianus (in Martyro. Hieronym.) informs us, page 476, that the Western Church, on the first day of May, kept a yearly commemoration of the beginning of Christ's preaching, in like manner as she celebrated, on the sixth of January, the commencement of his miracles at Cana in Galilee. Hence Wandelbertus says: *Majas prima sacrat Christi doctrina calendas.* See chap. 27, on the method of Christ's preaching.

† It was at this return of Jesus to Galilee that he began to display the abundant power and virtue of the Holy Spirit, with which he was replenished. Hitherto he had shunned the notice of men, and only now began in Galilee to preach before crowded audiences, and to exhibit himself as the promised Messiah. Hence there can be little doubt that St. Luke speaks of the same return into Galilee, viz. after John's imprisonment.

‡ Jesus had not at his first journey to Galilee, taught in this public manner, which evinces that the four Evangelists speak of the same abode of Jesus in that country.—It would appear from St. Luke as if Jesus immediately after this went to Nazareth; not that he did so in reality, but the Evangelist by relating what happened in the sequel, takes occasion from thence to assign a reason why he preferred Capharnaum to Nazareth, as already related by St. Matthew and St. John. Wherefore St. Luke here states the reason of this preference, which the former Evangelists had passed over in silence. See chap. 54.

beforehand for this office of teaching, nor would he learn any thing from man, either by instruction or even by conversation and experience. For which reason he employed himself till the age of thirty in the humble capacity of a carpenter, in the obscure village of Nazareth. Hence men had reason to be amazed that he could speak so knowingly of what he had never learned. However, the Son of Man, destitute as he was of all instructions from men, immediately proposed to them what had never been proposed by any other man. He taught them a doctrine infinitely more elevated, more reasonable, and more coherent, than all that the philosophers had produced to the world. He spoke to them in a language so divine, so holy, so void of human passions, that it infinitely surpassed the ideas of men.* He took the only way proper to make a reasonable impression on the multitude, which was to instruct them with authority, instead of persuading them by long abstruse reasonings; but this authority he derived from certain and visible miracles. His moral lessons, therefore, are not supported by argumentation nor systematically arranged, but are positive commands, comprised in a narrow compass, and suited to the capacity of mankind in general, and were delivered by him with a majesty becoming a heavenly messenger: wherefore considering the method he adopted for the conveyance of religious instruction to the world, we are forced to confess, that of all miracles which Jesus Christ performed in preaching the gospel, the gospel itself is the greatest, there being nothing more divine, more worthy of God, or more inimitable by men, than the sublimity, the holiness, and the simplicity of the gospel. Whatever is done by man, savours of man: but the gospel is of another character. Man, i. e. the interest and passions of man do not here appear, and this is what men could never attain to. They do all they can to disguise themselves; but they are easily seen through all their disguises.

The words of men proceeding from their limited understanding, are generally addressed to those only to whom they speak: but it is quite otherwise with regard to the words of Jesus Christ. He knew distinctly all those that would read them in after ages: he had them present in his mind. He addressed his words to them in the precise time wherein he foresaw that they would read and understand them: and thus he truly spoke to them. To hear Jesus Christ preach is still in our power: for when we read the gospel, he therein speaks to us, and addresses his words to us in a particular manner. How is it possible then that men should pay so little regard to what Jesus Christ hath spoken for them? We listen with respect to what kings say, and think ourselves highly honoured when they vouchsafe to speak to us in particular. No one refuses to hearken to them, and yet we neglect to attend to Jesus Christ, when he speaks to us and instructs us in the words of his gospel.

* See the testimony of Rousseau, Introduction, p. 59.

CHAPTER XXV.

JESUS HEALS THE RULER'S SON WHO LAY SICK AT CAPHARNAUM. JOHN IV.

JESUS "came again therefore," after his return from Judea, "into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine," the remembrance of which miracle was undoubtedly still fresh in the minds of the people. He now wrought another miracle no less wonderful in behalf of one, who was above fifty miles distant from him. The circumstances of this miracle, as related to us by St. John, point out in Regulus the different and imperfect degrees of his faith; this, however weak and wavering at first, became afterwards perfect and entire.

"And there was a certain ruler,"* or person of distinction, "whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee," and that he had wrought some extraordinary miracles, "went to him† and prayed him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death." It appears that this Ruler had already some faith in Jesus, or he had not made application to him in this emergency; yet it extended no further than to consider him as a holy personage possessing the power of healing in desperate cases, by the imposition of his hands and by his prayers. Wherefore he deemed it necessary for him to be actually present to relieve the sick, and that if they died, his power in their regard was then at an end.

"Jesus therefore said to him," rebuking him for the weakness of his faith: "unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not;" thus contrasting, as it were, the conduct of the incredulous Jews with that of the Samaritans, who had lately believed in him, without having witnessed any of his extraordinary miracles. We may observe how, upon all occasions, our Lord directs his first care and attention to the interior, before he proceeds to display the external effects of his power. "The Ruler" considered this reproof of Jesus as a kind of refusal, at least as a delay; and fearful lest his son should die in the interval, "saith to him," with still more earnestness: "Lord, come down before that my son die," being fully prepossessed with the idea, that were he actually dead before the arrival of Jesus, there would then be no further hope. "Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him as the word of a prophet, and went his way;" and in this respect his faith was somewhat improved. Satisfied as to the fact, he however still continued in doubt as to the cause of his son's recovery, and to be convinced whether Jesus had himself performed the cure, or only announced

* Literally Regulus, in Greek *Basilikos*, according to the Arabic version, an officer of the king. He was probably an officer of Herod the tetrarch, or rather of Philip, to whom Capharnaum seems to have been subject, and in all likelihood was put over the customs.

† Afflictions are always useful when they oblige us to have recourse to Jesus.

to him what he saw in spirit to have been done, he refrained from forming a decided judgment, until he should know the precise moment of his son's recovery. He therefore returned to Capharnaum, "and as he was going down, his servants met him, and they brought word, saying, that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better, and they said to him: yesterday at the seventh hour (i. e., one o'clock in the afternoon) the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: thy son liveth." Conceiving that neither accident nor the common course of nature could have produced so exact a coincidence between two such very opposite circumstances, as the termination of a most violent fever, and the words pronounced by Jesus, who assured him of it, though at the distance of more than fifty miles; he reasonably concluded that the word of Jesus must have been the sole and immediate cause of his son's cure; his faith at once became perfect; "and he himself believed and his whole family." Hence he no longer considered Jesus merely as a holy person, or as a great prophet, but as the Messias, who had been for so many ages expected by the Jews, and who now invested with the power of God, performed at the greatest distance such wonderful prodigies even by a single word.

"This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he came out of Judea into Galilee."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE GENERAL METHOD OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC LIFE.—HIS DRESS.—THE MORTIFICATIONS ATTENDANT ON HIS SACRED MINISTRY.

Before we proceed to the other actions of Christ's public life, as detailed by the Evangelists, it may not be improper to add here a few words concerning his manner of life in general, as well as concerning his dress. That our Lord led a common life as to outward appearance, seems evident from his own words in St. Matthew, where he says: "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say: behold a glutton and a drinker of wine." These words evince that, as John's food and drink were not such as others made use of, so on the contrary that Christ eat and drank as the rest of mankind usually did in those times. Hence St. Chrysostom* says of Christ, that he totally left to John his precursor that penitential way of life which is distinguished by extraordinary rigours, whilst he himself refused not to eat and drink at the tables of publicans and sinners, in order to convert them and procure their salvation. St. Austin† makes the same observation.‡

As to Christ's dress, it was, in all likelihood, such as was usually worn

* Hom. 38. in Mat.
† Lib. 16. contra Faustum, c. 31.
‡ See St. Thomas, 3. P. Q. 40. Ar. 2.

by the common people, being neither sordidly mean, nor particularly costly. A costly and magnificent dress he despised as peculiar to the effeminate: for they "who are clothed in soft garments," says Christ himself, "are in the houses of kings." But if, on the contrary, his dress had been particularly mean, it would not have excited the avarice of the soldiers who crucified him, nor have induced them to cast lots for his garments. The garments most frequently mentioned in scripture are the tunick and cloak, and we find that the dress of the Greeks and Romans consisted principally of these two garments. The tunick was made wide to leave perfect liberty of motion at work. They wore it loose when they were doing nothing, but tied it up close with a girdle when they went to work, or to take a walk. Hence that common phrase in scripture: Arise, gird thy loins, and do such a thing.—How many garments our blessed Saviour wore does not appear from the Evangelists, but he probably, in this respect, conformed to the custom of the meaner sort of people in Galilee. Euthymius* and Ferrarius are of opinion that he had three garments, which was no unusual thing with the Romans, who, beside the gown and tunick, wore under the latter another woollen covering next to the skin, like our shirt, called indusium, or subucula. As to that of Christ, which was seamless, there are three or four different opinions concerning it mentioned by Sandinus, p. 83.* To us it appears to have been wrought with long needles in the manner of a net.†—There is another question on which the holy Fathers equally differed, and that is, whether Jesus Christ wore shoes. St. Jerome thinks not.‡ St. Austin is of a different opinion,§ which he grounds on that of St. Luke, chap. iii. 16., where John declares that he is not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes. This is likewise the opinion of St. Clement of Alexandria, of St. Antoninus,‖ Cajetan, Toletus,¶ Saurez, Pererius, Menochius, and Baldinus. This last author** discusses this subject in few words, and refutes the arguments of his opponents.

As to Christ's poverty, it was not so great but that he allowed a common purse to be kept for the benefit of his apostles and disciples. This we may certainly conclude with St. Austin from the 13th chapter of St. John, verse 29. "Some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him: buy those things we stand in need of for the festival day; or that he should give something to the poor." However, it appears highly probable to the most learned interpreters, that our blessed Redeemer might, on certain occasions, in the course of his journeys, be reduced to the necessity of begging. For he says of himself, that he had not where to lay his head; and St. Jerome†† and St. Thomas‡‡ observe, that he seems not even at

* Conjectantes ergo dicimus, nec procul fortasse ab eo quod congruum est, tria fuisse universa: unum quidem fuisse tunicam corpori applicatam in modum subuculæ dico sane tunicam hanc inconsutilem: alterum autem quo super primum vestiebatur, et tertium exterius indumentum. Hanc vero tunicam e traditione Patrum accepimus opus fuisse Dei Matris a superioribus partibus contextum. Euthym. Comment. in Matt. tom. 19. Bib. PP.

* See chap. 143 of this work, John 23. note.
† See Ferrarius, de re Vestiaria, P. i. l. 3
‡ Ep. 22. c. 8.
§ Ser. 101. c. 6.
‖ 3 Part. Hist. tit. 23.
¶ Lib. 2. Præda. c. 11.
** De calceo Antiquo, c. 26.
†† In Matt. c. 21.
‡‡ Opusc. contra Impugnantes Religionem, c. 7.

Jerusalem to have had a lodging place, since he retired to the village of Bethania to seek one at the house of Lazarus and his sisters.

Although Jesus Christ, during his public ministry, led a common life as to the exterior, yet it was far more laborious and painful than is generally imagined. To be convinced of this we need only consider,—1. That he was so poor that, as he himself says, He had not where to lay his head. He was obliged therefore, for the relief of his necessities, to have recourse to the charity of others. Pious women furnished him with what he wanted. Now when one thus depends so absolutely on the charity of others there are a thousand little wants which must remain unsupplied. 2. He had with him a numerous attendance, viz. the twelve apostles, and afterwards the seventy-two disciples. It was no easy matter to provide for the necessities of so many, and Jesus Christ felt the wants of all. They went from town to town without equipage, without provisions, being obliged to put up with what conveniences they found; so that his ordinary life was like that of the most simple peasant.

3. Christ preached, not in churches where every thing is properly arranged, and every precaution taken, to prevent a minister being incommoded; but in the open air, upon the mountains, in the plains, upon the sea-shore, sitting in a ship, while the people listened on the land; and this frequently more than once in the day.

4. Jesus made use of no public vehicle for his journeys, but always travel led on foot; and he must have been almost continually on the road, since he went through all the villages. Hence he was exposed to all the inequalities of the seasons; to the excessive heat of the sun during summer, and to the rains and winds of the winter; all which is unavoidable to a person who makes frequent journies on foot.

5. As to his diet, although he eat what was set before him, and did not refuse the entertainments of those who invited him to their houses, yet in all this he practised the greatest mortification, if not in the quality of his food, at least in the manner in which he took it. For, first, he never eat out of greediness, nor consequently sought the pleasure of eating for its own sake. Now where is the man so temperate, as not to commit faults of this nature? As he never passed the bounds of necessity, so he was never deceived in distinguishing this necessity: hence he never fell into that common fault of mankind, of which St. Austin speaks in his Confessions, lib. 10, c. 3., where he says: that the miserable soul is glad to be ignorant of the precise limits of necessity, that she may, under this pretence, indulge her sensuality. In fine, mankind are too apt to spare themselves in their labours, because they know not what their bodies are capable of enduring. But Jesus Christ always exerted himself, as far as it was possible without setting any other bounds to his labours, than what human weakness required. When therefore we see him sitting down at Jacob's well, we must suppose that his strength was exhausted, and that he could no longer stand on his wearied legs. This point alone, in regard to our Saviour, comprehends in it more bodily mortifications than are to be

found in the lives of all the saints.

6. But all this was nothing compared with the interior sufferings which Christ underwent in his soul, during the time of his public ministry. Men are but little concerned about the faults and imperfections of other men. They are sensible only to those which regard themselves in particular; and even of these they see but a very small part. The censures and defamatory speeches of others are concealed from us, and therefore pass unnoticed: but the case was very different with regard to Jesus Christ: he was perfectly sensible of all the faults of men; he deeply felt how much they were displeasing to God, and he might truly say with the Psalmist, the reproaches of them that reproached thee, have fallen upon me; he was not ignorant of their ingratitude and false judgments with respect to himself: he saw the weakness of his apostles and all his hearers: he perceived the little use they made of his word: he saw them all disposed to forsake him the first opportunity, and this their disposition, while he was talking and preaching to the people, was ever present to his mind, which must have produced in him a continual pain not to be described. Moreover, the ignorance in which men are of the day and manner of their death, takes away the sense and fear of it: they are not affected with it, because they do not think of it; but Jesus Christ knew all the circumstances of his death. He had always his cross before his eyes, and made continual advances towards it. All his motions were so many voluntary steps towards his cross. He knew that all about him would either forsake him at his death, or even be the promoters and authors of it. Judge now what little satisfaction he could have in the world; so little, that it hath been observed of him, that he never laughed. Nothing certainly ever equalled the seriousness of his life, and it is evident that pleasure, pastime, or whatever amuses the mind, had no part in it. Thus the life of Jesus Christ admitted of no amusement or relaxation: it was always on the stretch, always employed about God, and the miseries and wants of men; he gave that only to nature, which he could not refuse, without destroying it.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JESUS ENTERS CAPHARNAUM,* AND CALLS PETER, ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN.
MATT. IV. MARK I. LUKE IV. AND V.

"AND" Jesus taking his departure from Cana, "went down, and came and dwelt in Capharnaum,* on the sea coast, a city of Galilee, in the borders of Zabulon and Nepthali," of very con-

* Although St. Matthew, chap. 4. relates the arrival of Jesus Christ at Capharnaum, and afterwards his calling Peter, Andrew, James and John, who dwelt there, yet Arnauld places their vocation *before* the arrival of Jesus Christ at Capharnaum, as if he had not as yet entered the town, when he called them at the lake of Genesareth. As it appears, however, more natural to suppose that Jesus Christ reached this town, before he performed any thing memorable in the neighbourhood, the whole passage is arranged according to the order of St. Matthew,

* Lamy, Lightfoot, and Calmet place this city at the north-west side of the lake. It is no where mentioned in the Old Testament either under this or any name like it, and, therefore, it was probably one of those towns which the Jews built after their return from the Babylonish captivity Josephus calls it Capharnon.

siderable extent, and much renowned for its wide extensive commerce, and for the affluence of its inhabitants. Jesus chose this city for his usual place of residence, as being the metropolis of Galilee, "that it might be fulfilled which was said by Isaias the prophet: the land of Zabulon and the land of Napthalim, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness hath seen great light: and a light is risen to them who sat in the region of the shadow of death." In effect, the people of this country, hitherto involved in the dark mist of error and ignorance, and sitting as it were in the dark regions of sin and eternal death, now beheld a great light break forth among them, a God made man, who came purposely to enlighten them with the doctrine of eternal life.

The disciples whom Jesus had first called to the faith upon the banks of the Jordan, had likewise followed him into Galilee, and, without doubt, as far as Capharnaum: yet they were not wholly attached to him, and therefore returned again to their usual course of living, which was that of fishing. Jesus chose now to engage them entirely to his service, and in the recital given us by the Evangelists, we may observe 1. Their vocation, not to the faith which they had already received, but to the apostolic school of Jesus. 2. An emblem or figure of the employment to which they were called. 3. The reasons they had to rely upon the providential care of Jesus in their behalf.

"Now Jesus walking near the sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, (for they were fishers.) And going from thence a little further, he saw two other brothers,* James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father mending their nets. And it came to pass, when the multitudes pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth,† and saw" the said "two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.‡ And going into one of the ships, which was Simon's he desired him to put off a little from the land: and sitting he taught the multitudes out of the ship.

"Now when he had ceased to speak,

* It is probable, according to A. Lapide, Tirinus,&c. that it is the same calling of the four Apostles which is mentioned in a cursory manner by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and more in detail by St. Luke. St. Matthew and St. Mark only relate that Jesus saw, and called the Apostles, without making any mention either of his preaching from the boat, or of the miraculous draught of fishes. It is from St. Luke, who gives a circumstantial narrative of the whole transaction, that we learn these particulars. However, St. Austin, St. Thomas, and Maldonatus, &c. distinguish the vocation mentioned by St. Luke from that described by St. Matthew and St. Mark. See Wouters.

† The lake of Genesareth, the sea of Gallilee, and the sea of Tiberias, are different names which the Evangelists give to the same lake. According to Josephus, it was forty furlongs in breadth and in length one hundred, and was called in the old Testament the *sea of Cenereth*, Numb. xxxiv. 11. Afterwards it was named the *sea of Galilee*, from the province of Galilee in general, the *sea of Tiberias* from a town of that name standing on its western coast, and the lake of Genesareth from that particular tract of Galilee which bounded it a great way on the western side The river Jordan runs through it, and stocks it with a great variety of fish of a particular shape, not to be equalled in any other place. It was a common saying among the Jews, that God loved the sea of Galilee more than any other sea; which so far holds good, that this sea, above all others, was honoured with the divine presence of our blessed Saviour, while he dwelt at Capharnaum, and even once after he was risen from the dead. The lake lies upon a gravel, which makes its water of a good taste and colour. It is softer than either fountain or river water, and at the same time extremely cold.

‡ To reconcile this with St. Matthew and St. Mark, it must be observed that the boats being brought to shore, the fishers, as usual, were employed different ways; some of them were washing, others mending their nets; whilst others cast in their nets again, desirous of trying whether they could catch any thing from the shore; and thus some were in the boat and the rest on shore.

he said to Simon launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to him: Master, we have laboured all the night," which is the most favourable time for fishing, "and" yet "have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net was breaking. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying," with the most profound humility and reverence, "depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men,"† not in order to their destruction, but that they may enjoy eternal life: "and he said" to Andrew, conjointly with his brother Simon, "follow me, and I will make you fishers of men; and presently leaving their nets they followed him.‡ And forthwith he called the other two brothers James and John, "and they presently leaving their nets and their father in the ship with the hired servants, and having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him," and became ever after wards his constant attendants.

The pious reader may make different reflections on the foregoing narration. 1. He may consider the zeal and fervour of the pious multitude, who went in crowds to hear the word of God, and, by their example, may animate himself to the same holy practice. 2. From Christ's entering into Peter's ship preferably to the other, he may learn where he is to hear God's holy word, and receive his faith and doctrine, viz. from Peter's chair, signified by the ship. It cannot be too often repeated to the faithful in these times, to hold fast, by the anchor of faith, to Peter's ship; the vessel of God's church may indeed be assailed and tossed about with various winds and waves, yet all the art and malice of man can never sink it, nor all the powers of darkness prevail against it. 3. By this miraculous draught of fishes Christ gave his Apostles a type of their wonderful success in the new employment to which he called them, of being fishers of men. But we may observe, that previously to this wonderful success, they had laboured all night and caught nothing. In like manner Christians often labour much and to little purpose, because they labour by night, i. e. without the light of God's grace, being benighted by sin; or because they depend more on their own industry than on the divine help, or, lastly, because they labour for things which deserve not their care, which are not permanent, but vanish away like a shadow. Of this

* These words of Peter are very expressive of the high sentiments which he entertained of our Lord, and of the consciousness which he had of his own unworthiness. In the same humble sentiments the Centurion said, Matt. viii. 8. "Lord, I am not worthy that that thou shouldst come under my roof; speak only the word, and my servant shall be healed."

† Not to kill them like fish, but to give them life, the life of grace and faith. For the Greek word *Zogron* signifies to take alive, as such fish and wild creatures are taken that are designed to be put in stews and parks.

‡ Nihil dejudicantes, aut hæsitantes, non solliciti unde viverent, sine mora sequuntur. St. Ber. Ser. 2 de S. And.

unsatisfactory nature are earthly things, when sought on their own account, and without being directed to God's honour and glory. This world therefore, may very fitly be compared to a sea, in which sinners and wordlings toil and labour all the night of their mortal lives and catch nothing. Their life is truly a dark tempestuous night; and when that is over, and the day of eternity begins to appear, then they will see that all their toils and labours have been fruitless; that they have laboured in vain, because they have not laboured for eternal goods.

4. We may likewise add, that this wonderful draught of fishes was a lesson to the disciples to place their confidence in Jesus, as to the relief of their temporal wants. By this specimen of his omnipotence, he would convince them that they might securely rely upon him for the care of their subsistence, whilst they dedicated themselves entirely to the preaching of the gospel; as they could not fail of being abundantly provided for by him who, with a single word, could do whatever he pleased. A similar confidence should be our chief support amidst the difficulties and disappointments of this life; let us cast all our care on the Lord, from a firm conviction that he hath a care of us; and that if we seek above all things his kingdom and his justice, he will not fail to bless our endeavours, and to provide for us whatever shall be necessary in this our present state of probation and improvement.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JESUS PREACHES TO THE PEOPLE, AND DELIVERS A MAN POSSESSED WITH AN IMPURE SPIRIT. MATT. IV. MARK I. LUKE IV.

"AND forthwith," after this miraculous draught of fishes, we behold Jesus "upon the Sabbath days,* going into the synagogues" of Capharnaum with his disciples to perform the functions of his ministry. "Wherefore the people being assembled as usual, he taught them "† the words of eternal life: "and they were astonished at his doctrine, for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. And" now an occasion presented itself to Jesus for proving the truth of his doctrine not merely by words: "there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit," who having remained peaceable during the instructions given by Jesus, began, toward the conclusion of them, to disturb the auditory with a hideous yell. "And he cried out with a loud voice, saying: let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God." The devil did not make this public confession through compulsion, and much less through flattery, but on the contrary, to chagrin Jesus, who instead of outwardly proclaiming his divinity, chose it should be, for the present concealed. This he did, lest the belief of his divinity being generally known,

* Hence we may infer that although the stay of Jesus at Capharnaum was of no long duration, as appears from chapter xxix., yet it must have been for some weeks, as he taught there on the Sabbath days.

† It appears from this and other places (See Acts xiii. 15.) that persons of known gravity and erudition were allowed to read and preach to the people.

might prove an obstacle to his future sufferings and death. He would have the Jews to be convinced of his divinity * chiefly by a natural consequence, which they might draw from his heavenly doctrine and his numerous miracles. And therefore "Jesus rebuked" the evil spirit on this occasion, "and threatened him, saying: Speak no more and go out of the man: and the unclean spirit" used his utmost endeavours to maintain his hold, "tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice. And when the devil had thrown him into the midst, he went out of him, and hurt him not at all. And there came fear upon all;" for "they were struck with astonishment, so that they asked one another, saying: What meaneth this? what new doctrine is this. † For with authority" and power, "he lays his commands on the unclean spirits, and they obey him, and" immediately "they go out" however reluctantly. "And the fame of him was spread forthwith over all the country of Galilee."

We may observe on this and other occasions that one of the many striking circumstances in the history of Jesus, was the great authority that he assumed, and the dignified manner with which he uniformly spoke and acted, exceeding that of any prophet that had preceded him. As to the particular subjects of his discourses on the present occasion, although the Evangelists do not specify them, we may reasonably suppose that they were such portions of the sacred writings as were usually read to the people, whereof we shall see an instance in what he did at Nazareth: his hearers were in raptures of admiration at his doctrine, so different from that of their teachers, both in substance and the mode of delivery; for his doctrine was as solid as theirs was frivolous and superficial. In lieu of pharisaical traditions, he taught the rules of the purest morality: as for instance, that without a change of heart and conduct repentance was of no avail; that the worship and adoration of God consisted principally in loving him above all things; that our exterior actions are only so far meritorious, as they proceed from a principle of sincere

* Tum quia rectius jupicabat hoc ostendere factis, quam prædicare.verbis, facta enim satis declarabant ipsum esse verum Messiam, tum ne prædicatione impediretur ejus passio. Estius in Lucam. c. 9.

† It is observed by St. Justin (Apol. i. 54.) that the discourses of Jesus were short and concise (*Bracheis kai syntomoi par' auto logoi gegonasin*) St. Chrysostom (Hom. 48. on St. Matthew) says that Christ accommodated his preaching to his hearers, and to his subject *pote mèn autois pachyteron dialegetai, pote de upsoloteron*, nonnunquam condescendens ipsis crassius, ue ita dicam, nonnunquam ut res petit, sublimius loquitur. The ancients differ as to the length of time employed by Christ in the ministry of the word. It is most probable that he spent about three years in announcing to the world his heavenly doctrine. In the first year of his preaching he seems not to have met with any great opposition, and on this account, it may have been called by the prophet Isaias (lxi. 2.) the acceptible year. Sandinus.

Christ did not preach to the Gentiles, as appears from St. Matthew xv. 24. "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." The conversion of the former he reserved for his apostles, after his passion and resurrection. St. Clement (l. 6. Strom.) says, that Christ likewise preached to those who were in hell, (qui erant apud inferos) founding his opinion on these words of St. Peter, Ep. 1. chap. iii. 19. *Coming he preached to those spirits that were in prison.* But the common and true interpretation of this place seems to be, that the soul of Christ, after its separation from the body and before the resurrection, descended to a place in the inferior parts of the earth, called *hell* in the Apostles' creed and sometimes Abraham's bosom, or Limbus Patrum, a place of rest, where the souls of the patriarchs, prophets, and just men were detained, as it were in prison. To these spirits he preached, i. e. he brought them this happy news, that he who was their Redeemer was now come to be their Deliverer, and that at his glorious ascension, they should enter with him into heaven, the gates of which had been hitherto shut against all mankind.—He may likewise be said to have preached to the infernal spirits, inasmuch as on this occasion he manifested and displayed to them his power and divinity. Ipsa prædicatio nihil aliud intelligi potest quam manifestatio Divinitatis ejus, quæ manifestata est infernalibus per virtuosum descensum Christi ad inferos. St. Thomas, 3 P. Q. 52 Ar. 2. See St. Austin Ep. 164, alias 99.

charity and a right intention; all which maxims were unknown to the generality of the Doctors and Pharisees.

The contrast between the manner and behaviour of Jesus and that of the Jewish teachers was not less striking. He invariably spoke in the tone of a law-giver, who does not merely publish the will of others, but makes laws himself to regulate the whole duty of man. He expressed himself with a degree of majesty, which commanded the veneration of all persons, with a grace which gained their affections, and with a force and efficacy which almost ensured their obedience. Lastly, he supported the truth of his doctrine by the most perfect propriety of conduct in every particular, and by the most wonderful miracles. The Jewish teachers were evidently inferior to him in all these respects: mere interpreters of the law of Moses, they went no further than to explain its meaning by traditions of human invention, destitute of every merit, of elegance, of solidity, of perspicuity, and of religious unction.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CURE OF PETER'S MORHER-IN-LAW.* MATT. VIII. MARK I. LUKE IV.

As Jesus commenced the first day of his public ministry by a display of his miraculous powers, so he was pleased to close it with similar proofs of his divinity. The Evangelists have entered into a minute detail of one of these miracles: the others they have related only in general terms.

"And immediately going out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John." From this verse it appears that these two brothers, although natives of Bethsaida, had settled at Capharnaum; probably for the greater convenience of exercising their trade of fishing, which was more productive there than at Bethsaida, and because Peter had married a person of that place. "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick," for she was seized with a great fever, and forthwith they tell him of her, and entreated him in favour of her: and coming to her he lifted her up, taking her by the hand; and standing over her he commanded the fever to leave her, and immediately the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them;" for no length of time was necessary for the recovery of her strength, as is usual after a severe illness, and particularly with persons advanced in years.

"And when it was evening, after sun-set, they brought to him many that were possessed with the devil," and "all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to him. And all the city was assembled together at the door, to witness so extraordinary a sight. "But he, laying his hands on

* It appears from St. Mark and St. Luke, that the cure of Peter's mother-in-law, and of the other sick here mentioned, happened after the preceding narration, and probably on the same day. But St. Matthew does not observe this order: for having related that Jesus, after his sermon on the mount, entered Capharnaum, and healed the Centurion's servant, he hence takes occasion to mention this and the other miracles which he had omitted, and which Jesus had wrought at his first coming to Capharnaum.

every one of them, healed them; and he cast out many devils with his word, and all that were sick he healed. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying: he took our infirmities, and bore our diseases. And the devils went out from many, crying and saying: thou art the Son of God; and rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ." * The Pharisees afterwards attributed the expulsion of devils to a collusion between them and Jesus: but this calumny is here amply refuted beforehand, by the compulsory manner in which Jesus obliges them to give up the hold which they possessed, and to be silent concerning him. However, the accomplishment of the prophecies respecting Christ, and the plain and explicit testimony of the devils his enemies, were incontestable proofs that he was the Messiah promised in the law.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JESUS RETIRES INTO THE DESERT, AND AFTERWARDS PREACHES IN GALILEE.*
MATT. IV. MARK I. LUKE IV.

JESUS here affords an example, 1. Of prudence, teaching us to foresee such obstacles and impediments as we may have to encounter in the way of salvation. 2. Of a proper firmness in not allowing ourselves to be diverted from our religious purposes by any pretext whatever. 3. Of an unremitting application to all those duties which God requires of us in our respective situations of life.

* Although it may appear from this text, as well as from St. Mark i. 34. that the devil really knew our Saviour to be the Son of God, yet the best interpreters are of opinion, that he had not a perfect and certain knowledge of our Lord's divinity, till after his resurrection from the dead; for otherwise, as St. Paul tells us, *he would never have crucified the Lord of glory*, 1 Cor. ii. The state of humiliation which he chose, the obscurity in which he lived, and the persecutions which he suffered without resistance, deceived the devil, and kept him in some degree of suspense. Moreover his hatred of Christ, whom he considered as his declared enemy, might probably blind him so far as to consider his destruction absolutely necessary for the securing of his own usurped kingdom. Mede, Lardner, Farmer and other moderns, would willingly persuade us, that the devils which here and elsewhere are said to have been cast out, were only certain bodily diseases which Jesus cured. But this is a forced construction obviously repugnant to the sacred text. See Matt. iv. 24. and x. 1. Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41. where a manifest distinction is made between the cure of diseases and the casting out of devils. See Rondet's Dissertation in the new Latin and French Bible.—No one can doubt of the existence of evil spirits, who believes the sacred oracles to be true. By them we are informed that the devils fell from a state of justice and sanctity, by their own malice and sin, and that in punishment thereof, they were hurled down from their seats, and condemned to hell, 2 Peter ii. 4. Whilst some were immediately confined to those dungeons, others are left more at large until the day of judgment; and in the mean time, their torments seem less grievous, Matt. viii. 29. 31: &c. See Petavius, Tr. de Angelis.—These fiends are called the princes of darkness, of the air, and of the world, Ephes. ii. 1. 2. and vi. 12. Matt. xii. 22. Luke ix. 1. They differ in their ranks in a kind of hierarchy, and some are worse than others, Matt. xii. 24. Ephes. vi. 12. &c. Their prince is sometimes called *Lucifer*, at other times *Belial*, i. e. the evil one; or rather, according to St. Jerome, the rebel: also Satan, or the *enemy*, and Beelzebub from the chief idol of the Accaronites, &c. The rage, malice, and envy of the devils against man are implacable; and their natural subtilty and strength are very great, as appears from the perfection of their being, which is purely spiritual, and from examples where God suffered them more remarkably to exert their power, as in hurrying the swine into the lake, killing the seven first husbands of Sara, &c. Although Satan be bound and his power much curbed by the triumph of Christ over him, yet he is permitted by God to continue in some degree, the mischievous influence of his malice against men, especially such as are wicked. He is even allowed sometimes to torment them by corporal possessions and obsessions. In the former case he seizes on some of the corporal organs or senses; in the latter, he represents certain images, as present to the eyes or imagination with an invincible obstinacy. This is confirmed by the testimony and experience of all ages and nations. Against the malignant efforts and possessions of the devil, the Church has instituted and always practised exorcisms and blessings.

* As St. Mark and St. Luke join together Christ's retreat into the desert with his journey into Galilee, we cannot doubt but they both happened before the reprimand given to the Scribe, as mentioned in the following chapter. St. Matthew however connects it with what we have just mentioned in the preceding chapter.

On the following day, Jesus foreseeing that those who had been witnesses to his miracles, would use every effort to detain him among them, thought proper to avoid their importunity; "and rising very early, went forth into a desert place, and there he prayed," not on his own account, but to teach us what we ought to do, and to engage us, by his own practice, to a strict observance of our morning exercise. "And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and when they had found him, they said to him; All seek thee; and he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also, for to this purpose am I come" from Capharnaum. "And the multitude sought him, and came unto him; and they stayed him that he should not depart from them," either out of apprehension that he intended to fix his residence elsewhere, or from their being so struck with admiration of him, as not willingly to be separated from him, even for the shortest period of time. "To whom he said: to other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God; for to this end am I sent. And Jesus went about all Galilee,* teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people, and casting out devils. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they presented to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments and such as were possessed by devils, and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and he cured them."

Although the power of Jesus equally extended to all supernatural works, yet we may observe, that he gave a decided preference to such miracles as tended to relieve mankind from pain and sickness; omitting others which would merely have occasioned fear, or excited curiosity in the spectators. Both these kinds of miracles, indeed, would have equally testified the truth of his doctrine, and have vouched for his omnipotence; but the former species of miracles more completely answered to his name of Jesus, which means the Saviour of the mankind. 2. As the object of Christ's mission was to deliver souls from the tyrany of the devil, from the disorders of their passions, and from the death of their sins, so he acted more conformably with this office, by expelling the devil from the bodies of them that were possessed, by healing such as were sick, and by raising the dead to life: for all these are expressive emblems or figures of the various diseased states of the soul of man. 3. The design of Christ's coming was to impart his graces to men at present, with a promise of their future glory and happiness: now the healing of their bodies was an earnest of the effect of grace in healing their souls; the temporal benefits which he bestowed, were pledges of eternal goods; and this humane and beneficent line of conduct was better adapted to win the love and confidence of mankind, than the most unheard of and extraordinary prodigies.

* This was a province of Palestine which contained the tribes of Issachar, Zabulon, Nepthali, and Aser towards the north, with part of Dan and Perea beyond the Jordan. It was generally divided into two parts, the *Upper* and the *Lower* Galilee: the former was called *Galilee* of the *Gentiles*, Matt: iv. 15. either because it was chiefly possessed by the Gentiles with Jews interspersed among them; or rather, because it bordered upon Gentile nations, such as the Phenicians, Syrians, and Arabians. The whole country, according to Josephus, was fruitful, being well cultivated by an industrious and laborious people.

CHAPTER XXX.

THREE MEN ARE REPROVED BY JESUS * MATT. VIII. LUKE IX.

When Jesus had ended his circuit about Galilee, he found himself near to the sea which takes its name from that country. "And seeing the great multitudes about him, he gave orders" to his disciples "to pass over the water," in order to disengage himself from their importunity. He had likewise in view the deliverance of two possessed persons, whom the devil tormented in an extraordinary manner. "And it came to pass as they walked in the way,† a certain Scribe came and said to him: Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go." One of the disciples of Jesus made a similar offer of his service: and to these we add a third, in order that, in one view, may be seen the various rebukes given by Jesus to different persons according to their respective merits and different dispositions. Of these persons the first here mentioned was the Scribe, who had his mind filled with the ideas of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah: he therefore made a tender of his service, merely with a view to his own aggrandizement in the world. But Jesus discovers his interested views, "and saith to him: the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;" hereby signifying the terms upon which he might be admitted among his followers, and the treatment he was to expect in his society. Upon this, the Doctor of the law, as may be easily conjectured, retired immediately from his company, not a little disappointed in the expectations which he had conceived of improving his worldly fortune.

The second of these, according to St. Clement of Alexandria, was St. Philip, who was already in the number of Christ's disciples. Jesus willing to attach him still more to his service, "said to him: follow me. But he replied: Lord, let me first go and bury my father," just now dead. "But Jesus said to him: follow" thou "me, and let the dead bury their dead," i. e. let men of the world who are spiritually dead in sin, bury those who are dead both corporally and spiritually. By this answer we are taught that of two incompatible duties, we should always prefer that which is most essentially necessary, and that which regards the glory of God and the salvation of souls, before that which is merely of a temporal nature. Moreover, it is but reasonable to lay aside such duties as can be performed by others, when we are called to the

* We here resume the narration of St. Matthew, who connects together this rebuke given by Jesus to the storm appeased, and the legion of devils that were driven into the swine, in such a manner that they cannot well be separated. It was therefore necessary to interrupt the narrative of St. Mark and St. Luke.

† St. Luke speaks of the way that led to Jerusalem, and we cannot doubt that one or other of these three events (probably the third) took place when Jesus was on his road thither. But as the Evangelist takes occasion to mention the rebuke made by Jesus to the Scribe in his way to the sea, we did not separate these three reproofs, though in fact they happened in different times and places.

performance of duties which individually belong to us, and to our state and calling.

"And another," viz. the third person,* "said: I will follow thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house," and dispose of my effects. "Jesus said to him: no man putting his hand to the plough* and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." If then you desire to gain admittance there, let not worldly cares engross your intention.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHRIST APPEASES A VIOLENT STORM. † MATT. VIII. MARK IV. LUKE VIII.

"ON a certain day, when evening was come, he went into the boat, and his disciples followed him, and he said to them; let us go over to the other side of the lake. And sending away the multitude," they launched forth into the deep, "and there were other ships," which accompanied and served to transport part of the crowd that had followed him. In this passage across the sea of Galilee, we behold, first, in regard to the apostles, the weakness and timidity of human nature; and secondly, the commanding power which Jesus exerted over the elements.

"And when they were sailing," he slept, being extremely fatigued by his journey, and by continually preaching to the people. "And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, and there came down a" prodigious "storm of wind upon the lake, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the boat was covered" with them, "and was filled with water, and they were in" immediate "danger" of sinking, "and he was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow. And they came to him and awakened him, saying: Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish. Lord save us, we perish." Their minds were in the present moment, it seems, no less agitated by fear than the sea was agitated by the winds. "And Jesus saith to them: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith. Then rising up he rebuked the wind and the rage of the water, and said to the sea: Peace, be still, and the wind ceased, and there was made a great calm. And "again rebuking them" for their want of confidence in his protection, "he said to them: Why are you fearful? Have you not faith? Where

* *Apotáxasthai tois eis tón oikón mo*, which may be understood of either persons or things, as we have given it above.

† It is clear that the three Evangelists speak of the same storm, because in each the object of Christ's passage is the same, viz. to the country of Genesareth, where the devils were driven into a herd of swine.

* *To put the hand to the plough*, is a proverbial saying to denote the beginning of any enterprise. This our Saviour applies to *spiritual husbandry*, and thereby gives us to understand, that, as he who undertakes the *plough*, should not look behind him, lest he make his furrows crooked or unequal; so he that engages in the ministry of the gospel, should not suffer himself to be encumbered with worldly concerns: but in the language of the apostle, *forgetting those things that are behind, and stretching forth himself to those which are before, he should press forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Phil. iii. 13.

is" now "your faith," that faith which you flattered yourself was proof against all trials and difficulties? "And the men" in the ship "wondered, and feared exceedingly; and they said one to another: Who is this that commandeth the winds and the sea? * for they obey him" as their Lord and Master.

The holy Fathers explain this historical narration in an allegorical sense, and contemplate herein this busy agitated world under the figure of the sea; under the figure of the vessel they view the Church, always tossed about and subject to severe trials permitted by the Almighty: the sudden storm they consider as the figure of the persecutions of tyrants and wicked men; in the sleep of Jesus, they view the patience and forbearance of God for a certain time; in the cries of the alarmed disciples, the earnest prayers of the faithful; in the awakening of Jesus, the succour afforded by him to his suffering Church; and in the ensuing calm, the never-ending peace of a happy eternity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JESUS EXPELS A LEGION OF DEVILS, † AND PERMITS A HERD OF SWINE TO BE PRECIPITATED INTO THE SEA. MATT. VIII. MARK V. LUKE VIII.

When the storm was now quelled, Jesus and his disciples, having passed the night upon the sea, "came" the next morning "over the straits of the sea into the country of the Gerasens," which is situated in the tribe of Manasses, "and which is over Galilee." A remarkable instance was here displayed, 1. Of the implacable enmity which the devils bear to mankind. 2. Of the merciful protection of Jesus against their malicious efforts. 3. Of the black ingratitude of mankind towards Jesus.—The fury of the devils had expelled two men from all civil society; the mercy of Jesus expelled these wicked spirits from this unjust possession; and the ingratitude of the Gadarians expelled Jesus from their territories.

"And as he went out of the ship and came to land, there met him two" men "that were possessed with devils, coming out of the sepulchres, exceeding fierce, so that none could pass that way. And behold," one of them in

* The stilling of the raging sea was so peculiar a prerogative of God, (Ps. xc. 9. Ps. cviii. 25, 29.) that it is no way surprising, that our Saviour's disciples and others should be convinced of a divine power residing in him who was able to effect this by a single word.

† The three Evangelists agree in the expulsion of the legion of devils, except that St. Matthew makes mention of two demoniacs, and St. Mark and St. Luke only of one. The difficulty is thus solved by St. Austin, (1. 2. de Consen. Evang. c. 24.) viz. that Mark and Luke only make mention of one as being more generally known and particularly frightful in the neighbourhood. As to the country of the Gerasens, it is to be observed that in the Greek of St. Matthew, they are called Gergesenes, from the celebrated town of Gergesa beyond the Jordan; but in the Greek of St. Mark and St. Luke they are called Gadarenians from Gadara, which is at no great distance from Gergesa or Gerasa, both places being situated within the district of Decapolis. Wherefore, as it is of the same country the Evangelists speak sometimes by one name, sometimes by another, the Vulgate as well as several Greek MSS. make use of the same name of Gerasens throughout.

particular, "a man with an unclean spirit, who was possessed now for a long time," was to all a frightful object, "and he wore no clothes, neither did he abide in a house, but had his dwellng in the tombs," which being out of the city, and built in the form of vaulted caverns, were a fit habitation for the unclean spirits that possessed him. "And no man could bind him, not even with chains: for having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains and broken the fetters in pieces, and no one could tame him. And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying, and cutting himself with stones." Thus there was never perhaps seen a more horrid object, nor one more deserving pity. He truly exhibited a lively representation of the cruel tyrany which the devils are permitted to exercise in this life over sinners, and of that which they will for ever exercise over them in the next world. "And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and fell down before him, and adored him," acknowledging by this mark of respect the superior power of Jesus, against which he and his numberless associates could make no resisttance. "And crying out with a loud voice, he said: what have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* I adjure thee, by God, that thou torment me not. But he commanded the unclean spirit to go out of the man, and asked him, saying; What is thy name? But he said to him: my name is Legion,* for we are many, because," in effect, "many devils had entered into him. And he besought him much, that he would not drive him away out of the country, and command him to go into the abyss" of hell. It is to be remarked that the city of Gadara was yet immersed in idolatry, as appears from Josephus, and therefore the odour of its sacrifices offered to devils, could not fail of being highly grateful to them. Moreover, it is the greatest pleasure of these wicked spirits to continue here among mankind in order to tempt them to sin, and thus involve them in their own miserable damnation.

"And there was not far from† them, near the mountain, a great herd of swine feeding: and all the spirits besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them; saying, if thou cast us out hence, send us (i. e. permit us to go) into the herd of swine" there grazing, "that we may enter into them:" a most humiliating petition this on the part of those sublime spirits, who had heretofore aspired to the throne of God. "And Jesus immediately gave them leave," that by abandoning the swine to the fury of the devils, he might show men the great favour he did them, in delivering them from the tyranny of these evil spirits. "And he said to them, go; and the unclean spirits going out entered into the swine, and the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, being about two thousand,

* That is before the time of the last judgment, when the devils are to be eternally punished, or as the scripture expresses it, *to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone for ever.*

* *Legion* is a military term, and according to St. Jerome in (Matt. xxvii.) and Vegetius (de re Militari, 1. 2. c. 2.) comprised six thousand men.

†In the Greek it is *en de makran*, erat autem longe: but it reads better with a negative, as in the Vulgate, and this Beza himself acknowledges.

and were stifled, and" thus "they perished in the waters. Which when they that fed them saw done, they fled" in great haste, "and carried the news into the city, and into the fields and villages. And they told every thing," in order to their own vindication, "as also concerning those who had been possessed with devils," how their deliverance had been the true cause of the catastrophe. "And" many went forth to see what was done, and they came to Jesus; and found the man, out of whom the devils had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And they who had seen" it, "told them how it had been done to him that had the devil," and "how he had been delivered from the legion," and also "concerning the swine. And behold the whole city went out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him," very ungrateful for the favour he had done to their distressed countrymen, they "besought him that he would depart from their coast, for they were taken with great fear;" apprehensive perhaps of yet further disasters, either in their goods or in their persons.* "And he going into a ship, returned back again," having thus executed what had been the object of his journey: "and when he went into the ship, he that had been troubled with the devil, began to beseech him that he might remain with him. And Jesus," considering his late condition as a kind of irregularity, "admitted him not" into the number of his disciples; "but said to him: Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them, how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and" how "he hath had compassion on thee. And he," full of gratitude, "went through the whole city, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him, and all persons admired" his wonderful narrative.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JESUS CURES A MAN SICK OF THE PALSY.† MATT. IX. MARK V. AND II. LUKE VII. AND V.

"AND when Jesus had repassed the water in the ship, a great multitude assembled together unto him, and received him" with joy, "for they were

* It is observed that all Christ's miracles, except this and the blasted fig-tree, were of the beneficent kind. We cannot but pity the wretched blindness of the Gerasens in driving Jesus from their coasts. As a just judgment of God, their city was the first that fell into the hands of the Romans in the fatal war under Vespasian.

† The history of the paralytic seems to claim a place here, because St. Matthew joins it with his own calling, with the dispute concerning fasting, and the coming of Jairus to Jesus, in such a manner that the cure of the paralytic immediately follows the expulsion of devils, as related above, and the arrival of Jairus must necessarily have been at the conclusion of the dispute concerning fasting; for St. Matthew says: *As he was speaking these things, behold a ruler of the synagogue came, &c.* What gave occasion to St. Mark and St. Luke to place the history of Jairus immediately after, that of the herd of swine, as if he found Jesus at the moment of his landing, was this, that he afterwards did in reality find him on the same shore, as appears from St. Mark, who says before relating the history of Jairus, that *Jesus was* NIGH *unto the sea.*

all waiting for him. And he again entered Capharnaum," which St. Matthew styles his own country, because he had chosen it for his more ordinary place of residence. "And it came to pass on a certain day, it being heard that he was in the house, many came together, so that there was no room, not even at the door, as he sat teaching; and the Pharisees and Doctors of the law were" also "sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and from Jerusalem, to hear and judge of his doctrine. "And he spoke to them the word of God, and the power of the Lord was for healing them" * in the neighbourhood, who applied to him under their several maladies. On this occasion, the faith of a man afflicted with the palsy claims particularly our attention; for in recompence of this faith he received the forgiveness of his sins, as well as the perfect cure of his disorder.

"And behold some men brought a man who was ill of the palsy, † lying in a bed, carried by four, and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him: and when they could not find by what way they might bring him, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof," which, as usual in the East, was almost flat, and surrounded by a balustrade; "and they uncovered the roof where he was, and opening it, through the tiles they let down the bed wherein the man sick of the palsy lay, into the midst before Jesus, who having seen their faith, said to" him: "be of good courage, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And there were some of the Scribes sitting there, and Pharisees;" who "began to think in their hearts, saying within themselves: Why doth this man speak thus? Who is this, who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? He blasphemeth. * Which Jesus presently knowing in his spirit, that they so thought within themselves, he saith to them: Why think you these things in your hearts? Why think you evil in your hearts? Which is easier to say to the sick of the palsy: thy sins are forgiven thee, † or to say, arise, take up thy bed and walk." Although these two efforts of power, in point of difficulty, be nearly equal, yet there is this difference between them, that the cure of the palsy is a thing which strikes the senses, and in which no one can be imposed upon: whereas in the former case, the object, which is the remission of sins, is not visible to the human eye, and therefore deception is more easy. But the person who can perform the second effect, which is obvious to the senses, ought to be implicitly credited, when he attributes to himself the former power, viz. that of forgiving sins, which is in itself invisible. Wherefore, to convince them, that he being the Son of Man, had a real and effectual power of forgiving sins, he undertakes to cure the sick

* The relative *them* (eos) is to be referred not to the Pharisees, but to the people of the country. A similar mode of expression frequently occurs. See chap. 39. Matt. ver. 9. chap 36. ver. 1. and chap. 76. John ver. 44.

† This distemper is reckoned above the power of medicine to remove, and yet our Saviour cured it several times merely by a word.

* Blasphemy means any unworthy and injurious language concerning God's nature or attributes, as when we ascribe to him such qualities as are repugnant to him, or rob him of those which are essential to his divinity, e. g. to ascribe to God the *infirmities* of man, or to man the *perfections* of God. This is the nature of the sin, the punishment of which, under the old law, was *stoning* without the gates of the city. Lev. xxiv. 15, 16.

† It is to be observed, that Christ in curing the sick of their bodily distempers, generally imparted to them likewise the health of the soul, by the forgiveness of their sins. See Saint Thomas, 3rd. Part, Q. 44. Ar. 3.

man in their presence. But that you may know," says he, "that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy: I say to thee, arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." The paralytic obeyed the command of Jesus, "and immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed in which he lay, and went away in the sight of all. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and all were astonished, and they glorified God," that gave such power to men. "And they were filled with fear, saying: we have seen wonderful things to day," and "never before saw the like" to them.

We may observe in the above mentioned cure, that Jesus enjoined the paralytic three things, which were naturally impossible to him in his debilitated state. The first was that of standing upright; the second was to take his bed upon his back; and lest this might be considered as a passing effort of nature, the third was to walk away thus loaded to his own home. These three circumstances or gradations rising one above the other, I mean health, strength, and labour, rendered his cure indisputable, and were consequently an evident demonstration of the remission of his sins, which being inward was not to be perceived by the eye. In like manner we may remark, that these three circumstances which served as proofs both of the corporal and spiritual cure of this paralytic, are still in our regard, the most unerring marks of our sins being forgiven. A spiritual palsy is a habit of vice; the soul is cured of this malady by a renewal of the love of God; this renewed strength is shewn in the sinner's subduing his passions, and applying himself to the practice of good works. Wherefore, to be restored to health in a spiritual sense, the sinner must be raised up from the palsy of sin, which affects the soul; by the love of God he is to be restored to life, and replaced again in the state of grace. The strength which he now regains will enable him to carry that bed which previously carried him, i. e., he will now become master of those passions which have hitherto tyrannized over him; and lastly, he will be enabled to set his hands to work by the daily and laborious practice of Christian duties.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JESUS CALLS MATTHEW, EATS WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS, AND VINDICATES HIS DISCIPLES IN NOT FASTING. MATT. IX. MARK II. LUKE V.

The gospel here places before us Jesus, 1. Calling a publican to the apostleship; 2. Justifying his own conduct against such as censured it; 3. Justifying his disciples against the misrepresentations of those who envied their happiness. We shall view him never losing sight of the mercy and compassion so congenial to his character, either whilst he confers the high-

est dignity in the Church upon a person who by merit had no claim to it, or whilst he shuts the mouth of calumny, and condescends to justify his own personal conduct against the attacks of envy and ignorance.

"And after these things, he went forth again to the sea side," not so much to take the air after his fatigue, as to perform a work of mercy which he had in view. "And all the multitude came to him, and he taught them" as usual the way of salvation. "And as he was passing by" the quay "he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, a publican," or tax-gatherer by profession.* He was likewise "called Matthew," and was "sitting at the custom-house; and" Jesus "saith to him: Follow me. And having left all, he rose up and followed him." Without doubt he had often before heard Jesus preach, and had been charmed with his doctrine; and St. Jerome is of opinion, that a certain amiable brightness and air of majesty which shone in the countenance of our divine Redeemer, pierced his soul on this occasion, and strongly attracted him to his service.† It is probable that Jesus allowed him previously to settle his accounts with his employers, not to afford to the Pharisees a cause of calumniating him on the subject of taxes, which however was afterwards made a principal accusation against him. "And Levi," considering himself highly honoured in being called to be one of Christ's disciples, "made him a great feast in his house," to testify his gratitude and joy. "And it came to pass as he was at table in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came and were at table with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many that followed him." Of these some were probably Matthew's friends, whom he invited with the hope that by our Saviour's divine conversation, they might also be converted. "And the Scribes and the Pharisees, seeing that he ate with publicans and sinners, murmured, saying to his disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners? and why doth your master" likewise "eat and drink" with them? "Jesus hearing this, answering said to them: They who are in health need not a physician, but they who are ill. Go and learn what means this saying" of holy scripture; "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and then you will know why I eat with publicans, and that in this I only do the will of my Father who sent me principally for them: "for I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance."

Commerce with idolaters was forbidden the Jews, for fear of the contagion of vice by evil company. This law the proud Pharisees extended not only beyond its bounds, but even against the essential laws of charity, the first among the divine precepts. Yet this nicety they called the strict observance of the law, on which they prided themselves; whereas in the sight of God it was hypocrisy and pride, which degraded their pretended righteousness beneath the state of the most scandalous sinners. They scorned to converse with sinners even for the sake of re-

* They who followed the profession of tax gatherers were, as such, detested by the Jews, being the agents or commissaries of the Roman knights; hence for a Jew to act this part against his countrymen, was considered infamous.

† But the great cause of his wonderful conversion was, as Bede remarks, that when he called him outwardly by his word, at the same time he moved him inwardly by the invisible instinct of his grace.

claiming them, which the law however, so far from forbidding, required as the first and most excellent of its precepts. Christ came from heaven, and clothed himself with our mortality, through the most tender compassion for sinners: he burned continually with the most ardent thirst for their salvation; and it was his greatest delight to converse with those that were sunk in the deepest abyss, in order to bring them to repentance and salvation. How affectionately he cherished, and how tenderly he received those that were sincerely converted to him, he has expressed by the most affecting parables; and of this St. Matthew is, among others, an admirable instance.

Our Blessed Saviour having proved to the Pharisees how irreproachable his conduct was with regard to this intercourse with sinners, they made a second attack upon him, by laying to his charge the good cheer of his disciples, which they contrasted with his saying that he was come to call sinners to repentance; thus endeavouring to show that his actions did not correspond with his words. Of the good cheer in question, they had a recent proof in the plentiful feast given by St. Matthew, at which Jesus and his disciples assisted. Nothing could be more artful than their policy in this instance. On the former occasion they had addressed themselves to his disciples and not to Jesus; here they do not appear as the chief accusing parties, but bring forward in their stead the disciples of John the Baptist, with whom they made a common cause, and who seem to have taken umbrage at the feast given by a publican. This accounts for St. Matthew attributing the attack in question to the disciples of John, whilst St. Luke considers the Pharisees as the authors of it, and St. Mark places it to both parties, it being evident that the disciples of John acted chiefly at the instigation of the Pharisees.

"Then came to him the disciples of John," viz. at his departure out of Matthew's house, "and likewise the Pharisees who used to fast, saying: Why do the disciples of John fast frequently, and practise praying, and likewise those of the Pharisees: but thine eat and drink, and fast not? Jesus answered them: Can you make the children of the bridegroom * fast? Can the companions of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?" No, certainly, "as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast:" so long as I am with my disciples, they cannot fast and weep. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them" by death, "and then they shall fast in those days." Jesus became the bridegroom of the Church by the conversion of the Jews, his nuptials continued during the three years of his mission, and in heaven they will be consummated for all eternity.

"And he proposed to them" also this "similitude. No man putteth a piece," taken "from a new coat into an old coat; for so he both breaketh the new, and the patch from the new suiteth not with the old: for it taketh away the fulness thereof from the garment, and there is made a greater

* The Baptist in his discourse to his disciples had compared our Saviour to a bridegroom, and himself to his friend, John iii. 29, and therefore our Saviour with great propriety, here designedly makes the same allusion.



The Sea of Siberia.

rent." This comparison of the old garment represents the disciples of Jesus as yet accustomed to the life of the old man. The piece of new cloth represents the fasts and austerities of the new law. The holes in the garment which would be rendered wider, represent the bad effects which would have ensued to his disciples from imposing new rigours on them in their present weak state, tending more to discourage than to increase their fervour.

Jesus next draws a comparison from the conduct observed by those persons who manage the vintages. "No one," says he, "putteth new wine into old casks," made of leather or skin, "for so the new wine" fermenting "breaketh the casks, and it will be spilled, and the casks lost," which might otherwise have served for old wine. Thus it was with the disciples of Jesus in respect to the austerities of the new law: they were, at that period, no more suited to undergo rigours than old and half-worn vessels were calculated for the holding of wine, which from its newness was in a state of fermentation. As wine in this state would inevitably burst asunder these old vessels, so austerities and fasts, to any great excess, would have caused the disciples in their actual feeble state, to abandon their new undertaking. "But new wine," says Christ, "is to be put into new casks, and both will be preserved:" so in like manner let my disciples be first renewed by the Holy Ghost, and then they will be enabled to undergo the greatest rigours of penance. "And no one that drinketh old wine hath presently a mind to new: for he says; the old is better." This last comparison is drawn from the medical science, and from that care which each man takes of his own health. They who are in the habit of using aged wine for their beverage, do not willingly change it for new, the former being deemed more wholesome from its being riper and less heady. This aged wine represents to us the Old Testament, which was proportioned to the weak state of the Jews, who were chiefly influenced by servile principles: but the new wine is the spirit of the gospel, inebriating the heart with a love which despises death, which pays no regard to the ties of blood or of friendship in opposition to the glory of God, and which undertakes things impossible to mere human nature. The disciples habituated to the wine of the old law, were not yet sufficiently strong to bear the new wine of the gospel.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JAIRUS COMES TO JESUS.—A WOMAN IS CURED OF AN INVETERATE ISSUE OF BLOOD.—THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS IS RAISED TO LIFE. MATT. IX. MARK V. LUKE VIII.

THE scene which is the subject of the preceding chapter, took place upon the borders of the Lake Tiberias: and "as he was speaking these things

to them, nigh unto the sea, behold there came a man whose name was Jairus; and he was a ruler of the synagogue" at Capharnaum: "he came up" to Jesus, "and seeing him, falleth down at his feet, and adored him, beseeching him that he would come into his house, for he had an only daughter almost twelve years old, and she was dying: and he besought him much, saying: my daughter is at the point of death; but come, lay thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live. And Jesus rising up went with him, and a great multitude followed him, with his disciples; and it happened as he went, that he was thronged by the multitude: and behold a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered much from many physicians, and had bestowed all her substance on" them, "and could not be healed by any, so that she was nothing better but rather worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the crowd behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: if I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed: and forthwith the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the evil.* And immediately Jesus knowing in himself the virtue that had proceeded from him, turning to the multitude, said: who has touched my garments? who is it that touched me?† And all denying, Peter and they that were with him, said: Master, the multitudes throng and press thee, and dost thou say, who touched me? And Jesus said: somebody hath touched me, for I know that virtue is gone out from me; and he looked about to see her who had done this, and the woman seeing that she was not hid, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before his feet, and told him all the truth, and declared before all the peofor what cause she had touched him, and how she was immediately healed. But Jesus seeing her, said: be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be thou healed of this disease; and the woman was made whole from that hour."*

We may justly admire the profound humility of this woman in not daring to speak to Christ; whilst at the same time we should learn to imitate her great faith and confidence in thus believing that the bare touching of Christ's garment would restore her to perfect health.

"As he was yet speaking, there cometh one to the ruler of the synagogue, saying to him; thy daughter is dead: why dost thou trouble the master any further? But Jesus having heard the word that was spoken, saith to the ruler of the synagogue," who was the father of the maid; "fear not, believe only, and she shall be safe. And he admitted not any man to follow him, but Peter, and James, and John the brother of James," his beloved disciples. "And when Jesus was come

* In gratitude for this miraculous cure she is said afterwards to have erected a brazen statue, representing Christ her benefactor, on which see chap. 153, and Euseb. 1. 7. c. 18. of his Church History.

† The reason why Jesus put this question was to disclose to the people the greatness of the miracle, which, without this examination, might not have been observed: it tended likewise to show the strength and virtue of the woman's faith.

* Not at the hour when Jesus spoke, but when she had touched him. Wherefore, by these words, as well as by those in St. Mark, "*be thou whole of this disease*," Jesus did not work her cure, but rather confirmed it, and in some measure, assured her that her disorder should not return.

into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels* and the multitude making a rout," as was usual on such occasions,† and the people weeping and wailing much, he said to them: why do you make this ado, and weep? Give place, for the girl is not dead but sleepeth,"‡ meaning that she was not to remain dead, but was presently to return to life, as if she had only been asleep. "And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead: but he having put them all out, suffered not any man to go in with him, but Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden, and entereth in where the damsel was lying," and "taking her by the hand, cried out, saying: Tabitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, damsel, I say to thee arise; and her spirit returned, and she rose immediately, and he bid them give her to eat, and she walked," for "she was twelve years old: and they, her parents, were astonished with a great astonishment, and he charged them strictly that no man should know it, and the fame hereof went abroad into all that country."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JESUS GIVETH SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN, AND HEALS A DUMB MAN POSSESSED BY A DEVIL. MATT. IX.

"AND as Jesus passed from thence" to his own habitation, "there followed him two blind men, crying out and saying; have mercy on us, O Son of David." This was no other than a public confession of his being the Messiah, to whom the voice of the people had ever exclusively consecrated the title of Son of David. However, Jesus not choosing to cure them in public he continued to go forward, without making any reply; and they, not considering this as a refusal, found means to follow him to his dwelling. This short trial of their faith evinced its firmness and constancy. "And when he was come to the house, the blind men came in to him; and Jesus,"

* In the books of the Old Testament we find no mention made of any *musical* instruments employed in funerals. We read indeed of a good deal of mourning for the dead, of mourners hired on purpose, and of the dismal ditties which they sung, to excite sorrow in others: but the use of music was reckoned incongruous for so sad and solemn an occasion. Among heathen authors there is frequent mention made of it as a thing long in use, both with the Greeks and Romans; and therefore we may presume that from these nations the Jews borrowed and adopted it into their funeral ceremonies. That among them it was in use in our Saviour's time, at least among persons of high rank, is plain from the passage now before us, as well as from Josephus, who speaks of it as an established custom in his time; and it seems afterwards to have grown into a kind of superstitious use, because the rabbins enjoin that none even of the meaner sort should, at the funeral of a wife, have fewer than two flutes, besides the voices of old women.

† The custom of assembling together to the place where persons have lately expired, and bewailing them in a noisy manner, is still retained in the East, and seems to be considered as an honour done to the deceased. See Chardin.

‡ In several places of the New Testament, death is called a sleep, John ii. 11. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. xv. 6. &c. and therefore our Saviour only makes use of this word of a *softer* signification, not so much with the design of imposing upon those to whom he directed his speech, as to testify his great humility and modesty, in thus desiring to conceal his divine power.

moved with compassion, "saith to them: Do you believe that I can do this unto you? They say to him: yea, Lord." Thus acknowledging his sovereign power. "Then he touched their eyes, saying: according to your faith, be it done unto you. And their eyes were" instantly "opened, and Jesus strictly charged them, saying: see that no man know this. But they going out," and following the impulse of their gratitude, "spread his fame abroad in all that country."

It is sufficiently obvious that this injunction of silence which Jesus laid on those whom he cured of their several infirmities, was nowise obligatory before God, as Calvin supposes; because the parties did not consider it as an absolute prohibition, but ascribed it merely to his modesty and extreme humility. In this respect his conduct is a lesson to all his followers, to beware of vain-glory; for though Jesus himself was utterly incapable of this vice, he knew it was our most dangerous enemy.

"And when they were gone out" of the house, "behold they brought him a dumb man, possessed with a devil; and after the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke, and the multitude wondered, saying: never was the like seen in Israel." Whereby they meant to say that God had never yet sent to them a prophet who cured all sorts of diseases with so great a display of power, or with such facility, or who had driven out all sorts of devils with an authority so absolute, as Jesus had done in their presence. These were the sentiments entertained by those who viewed the miracles of Jesus in a proper light, and as highly conducive to God's glory and to the common benefit of mankind.

"But the Pharisees," imagining that his miracles derogated from their credit and reputation amongst the people, spoke of them in a very different manner, and "said, by the prince of devils he casteth out devils." This their idea originated from a principle that is admitted by theologians, viz. that there exists a subordination among the infernal spirits: and that under one supreme chief who exercises a general sway, there continues to be the same gradation of authority which subsisted amongst them before their fall. Thus, the Pharisees maintained that Jesus expelled the devils from the bodies of possessed persons, not by a divine power, but by the art of magic, because they supposed that by making a compact with the prince of the devils, he had obtained a supreme power over all the inferior departments. Of this their blasphemous calumny, Jesus takes no notice at present, because they probably threw it out in a slight manner, and so as to make little or no impression upon the minds of the people; but when at a subsequent period, they repeat it to him in the face of the public, then it will be seen with what force and perspicuity he will expose the futility of so ill-grounded an objection.*

* See Chap. xlix.

PART III.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHRIST CURES A MAN WHO HAD BEEN INFIRM THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS, AND BY SEVERAL ARGUMENTS JUSTIFIES THIS MIRACLE AND HIS MISSION IN GENERAL. ST. JOHN V.

"AFTER these things, there was a festival day* of the Jews," viz., the Passover, "and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" with his disciples to celebrate it, agreeably to what the law commanded, Deut. xvi. "Now there is† at Jerusalem," near to the sheep gate (so called because the sheep destined for the victims were brought that way,) "a pond called Probatica," where the entrails of sheep and beasts offered in sacrifice were washed, which in "Hebrew," or Syriac, "is called Bethsaida",‡ or rather Bethesda, which means a house of mercy, from the cures performed there; "having five porches" or galleries for the convenience of the sick who flocked thither from all parts as to a great hospital. "In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered," impatiently "waiting for the motion of the water: for an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved: and he that went down first into the pond, after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under."

The circumstance of only one person's being cured out of so numerous a concourse of such objects usually attending there, is a clear proof that so extraordinary an effect was not natural, as Dr. Hammond imagines, but produced by some supernatural cause; since a medical quality in the water, of whatever nature it might be, could not rationally be supposed limited to a single object, but would of course have benefited a greater number. It is therefore to be deemed no other than a supernatural virtue imparted to this water by the Almighty, the effect thereof being of momentaneous duration, and precisely attached to the very instant that the water was put in motion by the angel.

It being a matter of absolute uncertainty at what particular time the angel would produce this effect by the motion of the water, the diseased necessarily kept their stations with great anxiety under the adjoining galleries. Yet, under this general state of uncertainty, it was usual, we may suppose, for the angel to descend repeatedly during the course of the year, and perhaps frequently in every month, lest otherwise the patience of these

* By this *festival* day is generally understood the great solemnity of the Passover, and this was the second from the commencement of Christ's ministry. We find this solemnity mentioned by the very same name in St. Matt. chap xxvi. 5. and chap. xxvii. 15. in St. Mark xiv. 2. and xv. 6. and in St. Luke 23. 17. Those who limit the time of Christ's preaching to three Passovers, will have it that St. John does not here speak of the Passover, but of some other festival day.

† Some Greek MSS. have *was*. In effect St. John did not write his Gospel till several years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

‡ Mr. Maundrell, in his travels, p. 107, informs us, that when he was at Jerusalem, he saw still remaining what was reputed the pool of Bethsaida, whereof he gives the particular dimensions, and tells us that at its west end there seem to be some old arches, not unlike to the porches in which sat the lame and the blind, &c. mentioned here by St. John.

distressed objects should be put to too severe a trial. Had they previously known the precise moment, no further attendance would have been requisite, except at the stated periods; but it was the will of God that they should purchase the regaining of their health, by a compliance with conditions which were attended with some degree of tediousness, and with no small trial of their patience.

"And, amongst other diseased and crippled objects, there was a certain man there that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity.* Him, when Jesus saw lying and knew that he had been now a long time, he saith to him," to excite his faith and hope: "Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man," conceiving that by this question, Jesus meant no more than to express his pity and surprise at his miserable condition, when so near to this health-giving pond, "answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him: arise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and he took up his bed and walked," thus exhibiting a substantial proof of his being perfectly cured: "and it was the sabbath day. The Jews therefore said to him that was healed: it is the sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed (Ex. xx., 10. Jer. xvii., 24.) He answered them: he that made me whole, said to me: take up thy bed and walk;" and surely he that could heal me with a word must be a prophet, and therefore must have authority to bid me do this. "They asked him therefore: who is that man who said to thee, take up thy bed and walk? But he who was healed, knew not who he was; for Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place," to shun their applause, and lest he should add fresh fuel to the jealousy of the Pharisees. "Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple," giving thanks to God, "and saith to him; Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee,"* for thy insensibility and contempt of this mercy. "This man," actuated by a sentiment of gratitude towards his benefactor, "went his way, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. Thereupon the Jews," instead of being touched with respect for the author of so great a miracle, "persecuted Jesus" and endeavoured to put him to death, "because he did these things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them," and justified his conduct by various arguments; first, by the example of his heavenly Father: "My Father," says he, from the beginning of the world, "worketh until now," and the rest he entered upon after the creation, and which he was pleased to honour by that of the sabbath, is no hinderance to the operations of his power in the preservation of his works, nor to the operations of his grace in the sanctification of souls, "and I work also"

* The word *astheneia*, which we render *infirmity* or *weakness*, is indeed a general name for almost all distempers; but here it is limited in its signification, and seems to denote what we call a *confirmed palsy*.

* These words are applicable to every penitent sinner, when he returns from the tribunal of confession, and show how careful he ought to be not to relapse into his former sins. For, as St. Chrysostom observes, "He is unworthy of mercy, who after pardon sins again; he is unworthy of health, who being cured, makes himself sick again; nor does he deserve to be cleansed, who after grace defiles himself again." Tom. 2. de Lapsu primi hom.

with him, being one and the same in nature and substance with him: nay, even as man I do nothing but what is conformable to his will, and therefore I do not violate the sabbath. "For this reason then the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his father, making himself equal to God" in one undivided nature. "then Jesus answered and said to them," confirming still further the indivisible unity of action subsisting between him and his heavenly Father: "Amen, amen, I say unto you; the Son cannot do any thing of himself, but what he sees his Father doing: for what things soever he doth, these the Son also does in like manner: for the Father loveth the Son" with an infinite love, "and" therefore showeth him all things which himself doth, communicating to him with his divine nature his wisdom and power: "and greater works than these will he show, that you may wonder," and admire the power which he hath given him. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom he will," as well the life of the body to such as are dead, as the life of the soul to those who have lost it by sin. And this power the Father hath given him, because he hath made him judge over all men. "For neither doth the Father judge any man" in a visible manner: "but hath given all judgment to the Son," who at the end of the world will return in his human body as the ostensible judge of all mankind; and this he hath done, "that all men may honour the Son, as they honour the Father: he who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him;" and therefore it is in vain that you pretend to honour God, whilst you dishonour me his Son whom he hath sent to you, in order to bring you to eternal life.

Jesus now proceeds to particularize those stupendous works which the Father will give him to perform with regard to the raising of the dead to life. These he reduces under three heads. The first is the spiritual resurrection, whereby a soul rises from the death of sin to the life of grace, and this he attests with the solemn asseveration of an oath. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth my word and believeth him that sent me, hath" a title to "life everlasting, and he falleth not into" that condemnation which awaits sinners, but is "passed from the death of sin" to "the life" of grace, and will one day pass from the corruption of a grave to incorruptible and eternal glory.

The second of these works, is the raising of the dead to life corporally, which he distinguishes into two parts; viz. the resurrection of individuals, and that of mankind in general.* He begins by the resurrection of individuals. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." This was shortly after realized in the persons of the young man of Naim and of Lazarus. "For as the Father hath life in himself," proceeding from no other person, "so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself," because the Son in the same eternity always proceeded

* Acts xvii. 31.

and proceeds from him so as to be equal in all perfections, and has life within himself, in such sort as to be a source or fountain of life to others. "And he hath given him power to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man," and as such is appointed judge of the world.

But the third work, viz. that of the general resurrection and judgment, is still more stupendous, and therefore Christ says: "Wonder not at this, which I have just mentioned; for the hour cometh wherein" not these few only, "but all that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Jesus here concludes this wonderful justification of his conduct against the cavils of the Jews, who taxed him with a violation of the sabbath; and from the principles he has here established, he draws this conclusion: that both in this instance and in every other action he can do nothing of himself, because he forms no judgment, nor executes any design but according as he hears, viz. according to the injunctions of his heavenly Father, which he fails not to observe. "I cannot of myself," says he, "do any thing. As I hear, so I judge: and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me," who is sovereign wisdom and justice.

These last-mentioned words concerning his Father who sent him, lead him now to a justification of his mission, which forms the second part of this discourse, and is the chief subject of this dispute with the Jews. For if the certainty of his mission from God be once clearly established, nothing ought then to have prevented his being acknowledged as the expected Messiah. In order, therefore, to establish it, he produces various testimonies, viz. the testimony of John the Baptist, that of the voice of his Father, that of the Scriptures in general, and lastly the testimony of Moses in particular.

Jesus lays no stress upon the testimony he bears to himself. Hence he says: "If I bear testimony concerning myself, my testimony is not" such as to be admitted by you as "true," that is, as legal, or admissible in a court of judicature. "There is another that giveth testimony concerning me," to wit, "John the Baptist, and I know that the testimony which he giveth of me is true" and authentic. In effect, "you sent to John" yourselves, "to know from his own mouth whether or not he were the Messias," hereby evincing your readiness to receive him in that character, had he chosen to attribute it to himself: "and he gave testimony to the truth" of my being the Messiah. "But I receive not testimony from man," as if necessary for my justification: "but I say these things that you" by believing his testimony, "may be satisfied," by that faith which he exhorted you to have in me as the promised Messiah. "He was a lamp burning" with zeal for the glory of God, and "shining" to the edification of men by the doctrine he preached and by the example he held forth to all of a penitential life. "And you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light," acknowledging him as a prophet and a just man, and therefore I may reasonably allege his

testimony in my favour. "But I have a greater testimony than that of John. For the works which my Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works themselves which I do" by the sovereign power which he hath communicated to me, "give testimony of me, that the" eternal "Father hath sent me. And the Father himself who hath sent me, hath given testimony of me," on the banks of the Jordan, "by a voice from heaven, saying: this is my beloved Son;" but "neither have you heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape: and even his" written "word you have not remaining in you, because you believe not him whom he hath sent." This subject he proceeds to explain more fully. "Search* (or you search) the Scriptures, for in them you think to have life everlasting, and the same are they that give testimony concerning me," as being that life and the way that leads to it. "And" having a veil over your eyes which blinds you, "you will not come to me," so clearly pointed out by the Scriptures; "that you may have life" promised to those who believe in me.

By this insight into the hearts of the Jews, Jesus perceived that these several testimonies in his favour only caused them to conclude him to be a person ambitious of honour, and one who sought to pass for the Messias. He anticipates this their objection, by declaring that whatever he has hitherto said in his own favour, was by no means said with a view to gain their esteem, but purely for the honour of God. "I receive not glory from men," says he, "but" this I cannot say of you: for "I know" with sorrow, "that you have not the love of God in you." He here gives the reasons why they do not receive him and his doctrine; because they are "void of the love of God, full of self-love, envy, pride, desirous of praise and glory from one another." Hence he says: "I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name" without any evidence of divine authority, such as Barchochebas or even Antichrist himself, "him you will receive. But" how can you believe me and my doctrine, so humiliating to human pride, you, "who" are eager only to "receive glory one from another: and the glory which is from God alone," and which truly merits your care, you "do not seek." However, "think not I will accuse you to the Father." I shall not need to do it. "There is one that accuseth you," even "Moses in whom you" now vainly "put your trust;" because you do not believe in what he told you, "for if you did believe Moses, you would also indeed believe me: for he hath written concerning me" that celebrated prophecy of Deut. viii. 15. "The Lord will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me: him thou shalt hear. But if you do not believe his writings," for whom you profess so

* The Greek word, which is *ereunate*, scrutamini, ought to be rendered, *you search*, in the indicative mood instead of the imperative. This appears clearly from the context and mode of argumentation made use of: whereas the sense is but ill supported when translated in the imperative. "*Study ye the Scriptures; for you firmly believe and hope to find in them eternal life.*" This hope is the cause and motive which leads to this study; and eternal life is the end they propose to themselves in it. In this sense it has been understood by several ancient fathers, as the learned Estius observes. Wherefore, it is not a command for all to read the Scriptures, as Protestants imagine, but a reproach to the Pharisees, that reading the Scriptures as they did, and thinking to find everlasting life in them, they would not receive him to whom all those Scriptures gave testimony, and through whom alone they could have that true life.

great respect, "how will you believe my words" whom you so much contemn as a person without authority, and a violator of the law.

It is proper here to remark, that these testimonies in favour of Jesus rise gradually one above another, and appear more and more forcible. Thus the testimony of John the Baptist, to whom the Jews had listened as to an oracle, added weight and authority to what Jesus had said of himself. Yet, although the Jews, in every other instance, admire John the Baptist, yet his favourable testimony of Jesus they receive with suspicion, and accuse him of partiality. He must therefore proceed to a third testimony in his favour, viz. that of his own miraculous works, which is rather the testimony of God himself, and therefore not to be suspected of partiality or flattery, and which invincibly proves that God, the author of the miracles of Jesus, is also the author of his mission. But yet God appears not herein visible to their eyes, and therefore these miracles, coming from a quarter so odious to the Jews, are liable to exceptions. To obviate this, Almighty God gives previously a fourth testimony in favour of Jesus by a voice from heaven, as from the dwelling place of His Majesty. But it may be asked, who are they who heard this voice? The Jews pretend, that they themselves heard it not. However, they cannot but receive with respect the fifth testimony, which is that of the Scriptures, and particularly that of Moses, who promised the coming of the Messiah at the time when Jesus actually appeared. But still this testimony, however clear it may seem, is not sufficient for the unbelieving Jews, any more than the preceding ones; and hence may be drawn a proof of their subsequent reprobation. They pay no regard to Jesus himself, nor to John the Baptist, nor to the evidence of miracles, nor to the voice of God, nor to the Scriptures, nor even to Moses himself: their case therefore is desperate, and they are not to be converted.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JESUS VINDICATES HIS DISCIPLES FOR PLUCKING EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH DAY. MATT. XII. MARK II. LUKE VI.

"At that time Jesus," in his return from Jerusalem to Galilee, "went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day, called the second-first Sabbath;* and his disciples being hungry, began,

* St. Chrysostom (Hom. 40. in Matt.) is of opinion that this means a *double feast*, by which we may understand either a Sabbath and another feast concurring on the same day, or a Sabbath and a feast immediately succeeding each other. Theophylactus coincides with St. Chrysostom, and adds, that the latter day on which they were to rest, was called the second-first. Modern interpreters have adopted other expositions, of which the most plausible seems to be that the second-first Sabbath refers to the feast of Pentecost, which also happened when corn was ripe in Palestine. To understand this, we must observe that the Jews had three feasts called *prota*, i. e. *great, solemn* feasts. The first was that of the Passovor, with the seven days of unleavened bread (called *protoproton*, primorum-primum, i. e. the first-first Sabbath): the second was the great feast of Pentecost (*deuteroproton*, primorum-secundum, the second-first Sabbath): the third was the feast of tabernacles (*tritoproton*, primorum-tertium, the third-first or great Sabbath.)

as they went along, to pluck the ears of corn and to eat, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees seeing them, said to him: behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day." The crime here alleged against them, was not the gathering and rubbing of a few ears of corn, (this being allowed, Deut. xxiii. 25) but the doing it on a Sabbath day, when the law forbade even the preparing of victuals; much more this plucking ears of corn, which was considered as a kind of reaping, according to Maimonides. "And Jesus answering them, said," in defence of his disciples: "have you never read what David did, when he was under a necessity, and was hungry himself, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God," which was then at Nobe, "under Abiathar* the high-priest, and took and eat the bread of proposition, and gave it to them that were with him, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for them that were with him, but for the priests only."

The second argument employed by Christ to justify his disciples, is taken from the work performed by the priests in preparing and offering the sacrifices of the temple. "Or have you not read in the law," said he, "that on the Sabbath days, the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame? But I tell you that there is here a greater than the temple," viz. the Lord and God who is there adored, and therefore that may be done for him without crime, which is done for the temple without the smallest difficulty.

The third reason is taken from the preference which is due to an action of charity and of natural right, before outward observances of religion, which are only of positive law. "And if you knew," said he, "what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice," Osee vi. 6. you would never have condemned the innocent, but suspended your rash judgments respecting my disciples, and would have preferred tenderness and condescension in their regard to a multiplicity of sacrifices offered in the temple.

"And," as a fourth reason, he said to them: "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Since therefore, in the concurrence of two incompatible precepts, we must give the preference to that which is the end and object of the other, in the present instance, we must prefer the preservation of life to the observation of the Sabbath.

The fifth and last argument is drawn from the authority of Jesus himself, who being the institutor and master of the Sabbath, had on this occasion dispensed his disciples from the strict observance of it. "Therefore," says he, "the Son of man* is Lord even of the Sabbath," and in cases which con-

* The high-priest to whom David addressed himself, is named Achimelec in the first book of Kings, chap. xxi. Some answer that the father and son bore these two names of Achimelec and Abiathar, which they attempt to prove from the second book of Kings, 8, 19. and from the 1st of Paral. 24. 3. Others say that Abiathar, son of Achimelec was present, and sanctioned the action of his father, thus making it his own. Finally, others contend that it ought to have been translated *in the chapter called Abiáthar*, instead of *under* Abiathar. For the Jews divided the Scripture into portions and called them by the name of the most remarkable person or thing spoken of in them. For instance Rom. ii. 2. *In Elias*, means the chapter called Elias.

* Grotius conceives that this phrase has here no peculiar relation to Christ, but only signifies man in general. But Dr. Hammond, Lightfoot, and others, with more probability contend that it refers to him who is the *Son of Man* by way of excellence, because it refers to him in all other places of the New Testament.

cern the welfare of mankind, has power to mitigate the exact observance required by the law.

The bread of proposition, or shew-bread, here referred to by Christ, was so called, not because it was set upon the golden table which was in the sanctuary, but because it was placed before the Lord, that is, not far from the ark of the covenant, which was the symbol of his more immediate presence. These loaves were twelve, corresponding to the number of the twelve tribes: they were made four-square, covered with leaves of gold, and were set six and six, one upon another in two heaps, at each end of the table: they remained there for a whole week, when they were replaced by twelve fresh ones, made, like them, of the finest flour, tempered with oil. Upon the uppermost loaf of each heap stood a vessel smoking with the sweetest incense. The stale bread, at the week's end, was, according to God's order, eaten by the priests within the sanctuary; nor was it lawful for any other person to partake of it. This offering of the shew-bread was a continual sacrifice, as the holy fathers observe, and by it the children of Israel expressed their gratitude, and acknowledged their dependence on God for the blessings they enjoyed. The like acts of gratitude are not less pleasing to God now, than they were then; and with far greater reason does he expect them from us Christians, as the blessings we have received are infinitely more precious. Among the many spiritual blessings which are peculiar to us, and which were not granted to the carnal Jews, we have received a more excellent kind of shew-bread, viz. Jesus Christ himself in the holy Eucharist. This is the heavenly and living bread, prefigured by the shew-bread in the temple, which is daily offered in the christian church in thanksgiving to God for all his benefits spiritual and temporal, and for this reason it is specified by the name of the holy Eucharist. Nor is it only the tribute of thanksgiving which we pay to God; it is also the pledge of God's special love to us, and a standing memorial of all his other wonders. The participation of this heavenly bread is not now-a-days restrained to priests only: it is extended to all and each of the faithful, that being animated with the same spirit, and nourished with the same divine food, we may all live and form one body in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JESUS HEALS THE WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH-DAY.—THE DESIGNS OF THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS AGAINST HIM.—HIS MIRACLES AND MILDNESS.
MATT. XII. MARK III. LUKE VI.

To this complaint concerning the violation of the Sabbath, the Evangelist adds another which had relation to the same subject. "When" our Lord "had passed from thence," he pursued his journey till he reached Galilee. "And it came to pass on another Sabbath, that he entered the synagogue"

at Capharnaum, "and taught" the people according to his custom. "And there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched if he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find a" fresh "accusation against him. And they asked him, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?" This question they proposed merely "that they might accuse him." For they thought within themselves, if he should answer in the negative, that it was not lawful, he would then be considered as rigid and unfeeling for the necessities of others; but if, on the contrary, he should assert it to be lawful, that he would then pass for a violator of the Sabbath. "But he knew their" secret "thoughts; and said to the man who had the withered hand: Arise and stand forth in the midst; and rising he stood forth" that all present might be witnesses to the cure which Jesus was going to perform in his behalf. "Then Jesus said to them: I ask you, if it be lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" For there is no medium between good and evil when our neighbour is under any pressing necessity; it being sinful not to relieve him, if it be in our power. "But they held their peace," being unable to make any reply but such as would pronounce their own condemnation. Had they answered that it was unlawful on the Sabbath to do a good action, or to save the life of our neighbour, they would have deservedly incurred the censure even of the whole synagogue; if, on the contrary, they admitted the lawfulness of doing good on the Sabbath-day, their question required no further answer, since to heal a sick person was manifestly a good work. But to bring conviction still more to their minds, "Jesus said to them: What man shall there be among you that hath one sheep, and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not take hold of it and lift it up? How much better is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do a good deed on the Sabbath-days. And looking round about at them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, he said to the man: Stretch forth thy hand: and he stretched it forth, and his hand was restored to health, even as the other:* and they were filled with madness. And the Pharisees going out immediately made a consultation with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. And Jesus knowing it, retired from thence with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude followed him from Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea,† and from beyond the Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing the things which he did, came to him.

* St. Matthew connects with this miracle the cure of the man who was blind and dumb, which however did not take place in this retreat, but in a house when the Pharisees were present. See the title of chap. 49. St. Matthew having mentioned this miracle, takes occasion to narrate others that Christ performed on his second return from Judea. N. B. That the particle *tunc*, *them*, and such like, do not always relate to what immediately goes before. We have already made this observation in the second note on chap. 13.

† *Idumea.* Though this be no more than a Greek name derived from the Hebrew *Edom*, yet it is not to be understood of the original habitation of the *Edomites*, Mount Seir, but rather of the Southern part of the province of Judea, which during the captivity of the Jews at Babylon, being left destitute, or not sufficiently inhabited by its natives, seems to have been possessed by the neighbouring Idumeans. These Idumeans being afterwards conquered by the Maccabees, chose rather to embrace the Jewish religion, than to quit the habitations occupied by them: and though as proselytes, they were incorporated into the body of the Jewish nation, yet that tract of Judea which they inhabited, did not lose the name of Idumea which had been derived from them, but retained it for a considerable time afterwards.

And he spoke to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he healed many, so that they pressed upon him to touch him, as many as had distempers: and he healed them all; and he charged them that they should not make him known," in order to give us a lesson of humility, and to spare the Pharisees the additional vexation and rancour which each of his cures would have caused in their minds. "And the unclean spirits when they saw him fell down before him; and they cried, saying: thou art the Son of God:" and he strictly charged them that they should not make him known, in order to avoid the further irritation of his implacable enemies. By this remarkable instance of his meekness and goodness, we may learn how far charity should make us guard against the malice of those who take scandal at our good actions. We must not, out of deference to the weakness of our neighbour, omit a good action; but we may hide and conceal from him the knowledge of it, after the example of our Blessed Redeemer. All these things happened "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet," chap xlii. v. 1. concerning the election, the employment, and the behaviour of the Blessed Jesus, "saying: behold my servant whom I have chosen" among all others, "my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he will show judgment to the Gentiles." In effect, Jesus published the divine ordinances, that is, the new law, not only for the Jewish people as Moses did, but for all the nations of the earth; and this office of legislator he performed not only by his own preaching, but by that of his apostles: he will likewise sit as judge at the last day, and exercise justice and judgment over all mankind. To fit him for this high employment, God poured forth upon him the full plenitude of his spirit, and his whole comportment bespoke an invariable meekness and condescension, according to that of the same prophet: "he shall not contend"* with his enemies, "nor cry out" as they who quarrel, "neither shall any man hear his voice" aloud in the streets: "the bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish," but shall treat infirm souls with incredible tenderness and meekness, supporting those who are under temptation and on the point of falling, and cherishing in others that small spark of divine love which yet remains after their fall, and which discovers itself outwardly by sighs, in some degree analogous to the faint smoke which is emitted after the flame is extinguished. These weak desires of conversion, these small remains of warmth, he will nourish in them, till he lights up again in their souls the flame of justice and divine love. In this exercise of inexhaustible goodness he will persevere to the end of time, even "till he send forth judgment unto victory," by making his gospel triumph over all his enemies. And in the mean time, "in his name the" converted "Gentiles shall hope," looking up to him as the author of their salvation and happiness.

* *He will not contend.* These words do not occur in the prophet, but are added by St. Matthew to express the sense more fully.

CHAPTER XL.

THE ELECTION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.* MATT. IV. AND V. MARK III. LUKE VI.

"AND it came to pass in those days that" Jesus went out, and much people† followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond the Jordan; and seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, which is generally supposed to be mount Thabor, about five or six leagues to the north of Capharnaum. Designing now to make a solemn election of his twelve apostles, and to give them an abstract or summary of the doctrine which they were to preach to the world, he previously retired "to pray, and passed the whole night in prayer to God" teaching us hereby how assiduous all ought to be in prayer before any important undertaking, and leaving to bishops in particular an example what they are to do in the great and momentous affair of ordaining and appointing persons to the ministry of the Gospel. "And when day was come, he called him whom he would himself" of his own disciples. "And they came to him, and he chose twelve of them," with an audible and distinct voice, "and made that" these "twelve," according to the number of these patriarchs, "should be with him" as his constant attendants, in order that he might train them up to the high ministry, for which they were destined: "whom he also named apostles,* that he might send them" in due time, "to preach," after having been first witnesses of his words and actions. "And he gave them power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils," in order thus to prove by the authority of miracles the truth of the doctrine they taught. "And to Simon he gave the name Peter," which means a rock; (this was a second time he had done it:) "And" he called "James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, and he named them Boanerges, which is Sons of Thunder," to express their future zeal in preaching the Gospel:† "And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew,‡ and

* Sandinus places this event in the second year of Christ's preaching, of his age thirty-two, and the election of his seventy-two disciples in the following year.

† What St. Matthew has already related by anticipation concerning the crowds that followed Christ, is here inserted in its proper place; so that this is to be considered as a kind of recapitulation of what in the foregoing chapter has been mentioned from St. Matthew himself.

* The word *Apostle* (*apostolos*) signifies an envoy, and was a name given by the Jews to any messenger in general, but more especially to such persons as were sent by the High-priest and heads of the people to collect the tithes and other dues belonging to the temple or synagogues, or to carry their orders or mandates to the cities and provinces, when any affair relating to religion was transacted; and to this custom St. Paul seems to allude, when he styles himself *an Apostle not of man, neither by man, but of Jesus Christ*, Gal. i. 1. But though our Saviour adopted this word from the Jews, yet he raised it to a much higher and more honourable signification; for himself declares that he sent out his Apostles, even as his Father had sent him, John xx. 21. i. e. with a full commission to act in his stead, as he did with regard to his Father: and accordingly we may observe, that *as the Father gave judgment to the Son*, John v. 22. so, in effect, the Son *gives judgment* to his Apostles. Matt. ix. 28. and Luke xxii. 30. That as the Father gave the Son power to *forgive sins* upon earth, Matt. ix. 6., so the Son gives power to the Apostles also to remit sins upon earth, John xx. 23. That as the *Son's* privilege is to *sit down* with his Father on his throne, so the Son allows his Apostles the same honour of sitting with him on thrones, Matt. ix. 28. and that as the Father gave the Son to be the *foundation* or corner stone of the church Matt. xxi. 42. so the Son gave the Apostles to be the foundations upon a foundation, *Christ being the chief corner-stone*, Ephes, ii. 20. Apocal. xxi. 14.

† Of this they gave an early instance in their desire to *call down fire from heaven* to consume the Samaritans, Luke ix. 54, and in the *Acts of the Apostles* we find that Peter, James, and John are the chief actors and speakers in the defence and propagation of the Gospel.

‡ This is not his proper but *patronymical* name, and imports only the son of Tholomew, or Tolmia, so that we are

Matthew, and Thomas,* and James of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes,"† perhaps for his singular zeal in the cause of God and religion. "And Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot," so called from a village near Samaria, "who was the traitor." This, according to St. Mark, is the order wherein the apostles were called by Jesus. St. Luke differs only in two particulars. He joins Andrew with Peter his brother, and places Judas Thaddeus immediately before Judas Iscariot.‡

It is to be observed that the apostles were not now actually sent, but only chosen and appointed in order to be sent hereafter. Their mission is described in chap. 56. It is, however, probable that they received on this occasion a power of healing the sick, which was full and complete of itself, though it was not till afterwards that they were commissioned to exercise this power.

"And Jesus coming down with them stood in a plain place," which formed a part of the descent; "and the company of his disciples, and a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coast both of Tyre and Sidon were come to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And the multitude sought to touch him, for virtue went out from him and healed all." By these miracles a full sanction was given to the doctrine which he was about to preach. He then sat down on the edge of the mount, so as to be seen and heard at a distance, "and lifting up his eyes on his disciples, and opening his mouth, he taught them," ranged in a circle around him, but so as to be heard by the people in the adjoining plain.* He now began that divine discourse usually styled the Sermon on the Mount, which is justly considered as an abstract of all Christian morality.†

still at a loss for his personal name, unless we admit of the probable conjecture, that he was indeed no other than Nathanael. See chap. 17, in the note.

* This in Hebrew or Syriac signifies a *twin*, and so is the same with *Didymus*, that other name whereby this Apostle is sometimes called.

† In the Greek it is *Kananites*, either from Cana, a town of Galilee, or from the Hebrew word Canna, which signifies zeal, as St. Luke seems to insinuate. In this case, *Kananites*, and *Zelotes* are perfectly the same, just as *Cephas* and *Peter*, *Tabitha* and *Dorcas*.

‡ St. Mark, who omits many things, immediately subjoins to the election of the Apostles, the return of Christ into the house, where he cured the demoniac. But this cure did not take place the first but the second time that Jesus entered into the house, when he returned from Judea. See chap. 49.

* Christ as appears from St. Matthew and St. Luke, directed the chief part of his discourse to his disciples; but from what St. Luke relates at the end of this discourse, we cannot doubt of its being heard likewise by the people.

† All agree that St. Matthew anticipates the sermon on the mount, in order thus to prefix the doctrine of Christ to the account of his miracles; for we cannot doubt that the discourse on the mount, which is mentioned by St. Mattthew, is the same as that recorded by St. Luke. The beginning, the middle, and the conclusion correspond to each other. If St. Matthew mentions some particulars omitted by St. Luke, it is because his design was to collect together several instructions, which Jesus delivered on different occasions, and these, for the most part, are to be found in other places of St. Luke. It is here to be observed, that Christ in order to avoid the press of people, retired to the sea-shore, taught them out of the ship, and cured likewise the sick, charging them at the same time not to make him known: he then, towards the evening, quitted the multitude, and retired to a mountain to pray. The morning after he called to him his disciples, and from amongst them chose his twelve Apostles. Then descending with them, they found at the foot of the mountain the greatest part of the people who had followed him the day before. St. Matthew says that Christ *ascended* the mountain and *sat down* to teach the people, while St. Luke affirms that he *descended* and *stood* in a plain place. But here is no contradiction, for he first ascended to the top of the mountain, and then descended to an even plain, which formed part of the descent. Here he stood for a while and cured the sick, as is mentioned by St. Luke; but afterwards, according to the relation of St. Matthew, he *sat down*, which was the usual posture of the Jewish Doctors. Such is the explanation of St. Austin.



The Sermon on the Mount.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT. MATT. V. LUKE VI.

THIS admirable sermon may be divided into three parts, viz. the exordium, the body of the discourse, and the conclusion. The exordium comprises the following eight beatitudes, which Christ taught the multitude, "saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Since all men aim at happiness, but, for the most part, unfortunately deceive themselves in the means by which it is to be attained, Jesus begins this discourse by showing both in what true happiness consists, and by what means it is to be acquired. He describes the happiness of eternity as the object of all others the most deserving our attention, and makes the happiness of this life to consist in the general means that may lead us to it; for certainly the only real and solid happiness of mankind here, is that of being in the direct road to a happy eternity hereafter.

Now the general means which are proper to conduct us to eternal felicity, and which also constitute our real happiness even in this life, he reduces under two heads; to suffer evil, and to do good; or, in other words, to be patient and innocent. Patience comprises four beatitudes, which are poverty of spirit, mourning, hunger and thirst after justice, and persecution. Innocence includes the other four, meekness, mercy, cleanness of heart, and the love of peace. To all these he promises the reward of eternal felicity, which however he expresses in different terms, according to the nature of the virtue to be rewarded. These we proceed now to explain in the order observed by the Evangelists.—1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus declares all those happy even in this life, who are poor in spirit, or in heart and affection. In this beatitude are comprised all those who, for the sake of Jesus Christ, voluntarily abandon their worldly possessions;—likewise all who, being born to a state of poverty, or reduced to it by accident, humbly submit to their lot without envying a more affluent state. Lastly, all those who, though abounding in worldly goods, yet place not therein their confidence or affection, but are ever ready to part with them, when the will of God calls for this sacrifice at their hands. The former, who are

really poor, as well as the latter, who are only so in spirit, enjoy happiness even in this life, because though they be here in indigence, or willing to be reduced to it if God so decree, yet as the kingdom of heaven with all its riches belongs to them, their well-founded claim is deservedly considered as the source of solid happiness.

2. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land." Jesus here declares all those to be happy, who are meek, i. e. who far from offending their neighbour, or doing him any harm, bend to the oppression of others, without even resisting such as are manifestly unjust. These are happy; because if their meekness exposes them to be ill treated and driven from their possessions by the ambition and rapacity of others, heaven, upon that title, becomes their due, as their own land and inheritance.

3. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." He declares those to be happy, who are sorrowful according to God, who shed tears in his sight for their own transgressions and for those of others; or, who lament the spiritual miseries and dangers of this life; a life which they view in no other light than as a banishment from their true country; or, who bewail before God the public calamities which take place in the world, or the particular evils, whether temporal or spiritual, to which individuals of all ranks are subject. Persons of this description are deservedly declared happy, because heaven is their assured reward, which is here pointed out under the title of comfort in their afflictions.

4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice;* for they shall be filled." He declares all those to be happy who hunger and thirst after justice, i. e. who earnestly desire and pray that justice and order may reign both in themselves and others. This desire makes us pray that the name of God may be sanctified, that his kingdom may come, and his blessing will be accomplished by all mankind. These are happy in the assurance they have, that their virtuous wishes will one day be completely satisfied, when sin being destroyed even in its very source, which is concupiscence, God alone shall reign all in all, and fill them with a torrent of spiritual delights.

5. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." He declares all those to be happy who are merciful, viz. they who show a compassionate tenderness towards the miseries and wants of their neighbours, and who, if his miseries be corporal, readily afford him such helps as are proportioned to his wants and to their own means; or, if of a spiritual nature, they endeavour to reform him by their instructions, or at least by their example give proofs of their merciful disposition, by forgiving injuries, or by fulfilling other duties of charity. These are happy, because a promise is here made to them, that heaven will one day be bestowed upon them as their crown and reward, and as a wonderful instance of God's gratuitous mercy.

6. "Blessed are the clean of heart;

* They who understand this hunger and thirst in a literal sense supply the word *propter* before *justitiam*, i. e. *on account of* or *for the cause of justice*, as is frequently done in the Greek language, The parallel text of St. Luke vi. 21. where *justice* is not mentioned, is favourable to this interpretation. However this would limit the beatitude to those who suffer hunger and thirst in a just cause, which yet appears too contracted a sense, and is implied sufficiently in the eighth beatitude.

for they shall see God." He declares those to be happy whose hearts are clean, and disengaged from all inordinate love of creatures: this cleanness extends itself from the heart to the whole man; it shows itself in the body by a chastity of manners, in the soul by a general mortification of the passions, in the will by simplicity and an upright intention, and in the mind by a rejection of all sinful thoughts. Persons of this description are happy, because being divested of all inordinate affections to creatures, which like clouds obstruct their sight, they shall one day see God face to face in his glory.

7. "Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God." He declares peace-makers happy, i. e. all such as love peace, and procure it both to themselves and others; who are ever ready, by making the first advances, to seek a reconciliation with others, and to grant forgiveness to those who solicit for it, by readily consenting to an oblivion of past differences. These are happy, because even in this life they are the children of God, who is the God of peace, and they will be infinitely more so hereafter in heaven, which is the kingdom of eternal peace.

8. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He declares those happy who suffer persecution, not like the wicked, in punishment of their crimes, but for justice and truth, i. e. for their faith and virtue; who suffer, in a good cause, the loss of their country and friends by banishment; the loss of their honour, by marks of infamy; the loss of their goods, by forfeiture; of their liberty, by imprisonment; of their health, by torments of their bodies, or members by mutilation; finally, who suffer the loss of their very lives, by martyrdom. Happy are these, because after having fought in the cause of truth, heaven is justly their due;—their acquired kingdom, the subject of their triumph and of their glory.

The last beatitude being the most important, Jesus enters into a more minute explanation of it, and thus encourages his disciples and followers when suffering in his cause. "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, when they shall separate you" from your friends and country by banishment and imprisonment, "and shall reproach you" for being Christians and Catholics, "and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake; and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice: for behold your reward is great in heaven. For according to these things did their fathers persecute the prophets that were before you," and the part you have in their sufferings will entitle you to share likewise in their glory.

To display this doctrine in yet a stronger light, Jesus contrasts the persons thus declared happy under four of these beatitudes, with four other descriptions of men, to whom he denounces eternal misery. "But wo to you" says he, "that are rich" in your hearts, whether really possessed of riches or only so in desire; "because you have your consolation," such as it is, here in this world. "Wo to you that are filled," and make good cheer

the sole object of your pursuit: "for you shall hunger," eternally hereafter. "Wo to you that now laugh," and pass your time in vain pleasures and amusements: "for you shall mourn and weep," hereafter without ceasing. "Wo to you," ministers, "when men shall bless" and applaud you "for preaching to them erroneous doctrines; for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets," who pleased them with easy and novel doctrines, such as were no less pernicious to the souls of men than they were flattering to their passions.

What we have hitherto given of Christ's sermon, appertains to the exordium, and merits our most serious consideration.

This discourse as hinted above, is chiefly addressed to the Apostles, whom Jesus had recently chosen, in order to instill into them, and all succeeding pastors of the Church, a right sense of the great duties belonging to their ministry; and, in the second place, it refers to all the faithful in general.

Jesus first considers the apostles and pastors of his Church as possessing the qualities suitable to the employment for which they were destined, as instructors of mankind. They are to instruct others by word and example.

"You are the salt of the earth," says he, "intended to preserve men from the corruption of sin, and to make them relish the truths of salvation. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more, but to be cast out and to be trodden on by man." So it will be with you, if you let your faith and charity grow cold, in which is all your force; you will fall into contempt, and be deservedly rejected by God, and trampled upon by the world. "You are the light of the world by your doctrine and example, and, as a city seated on a mountain cannot be hid," * so neither can you in this eminent station in which you are placed. What Christ here says of his Apostles is said likewise of his Church, which they represented. No object indeed ought to be more visible than that society which was to erect the standard of faith as a signal for all nations to resort to; otherwise, how could they, who, in this exile, sincerely seek the road to their heavenly country, distinguish the true teachers and guides who are appointed to direct them in that road, and point out the numberless errors that surround it. This society can be only that of the Catholic Church, which has always been visible, by a regular succession of bishops and priests succeeding one another, through every age to the present time. "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So," in like manner, to answer the design of God in your regard, "let your light," the light of virtue and piety, "shine before men, that they may see your good works, and" hence "glorify your Father who is in heaven." This precept is by no means contrary to that which he afterwards enjoins, of hiding our good works. He is here principally forming pastors for his

* See St. Austin (lib. 2. contra lit. Petil,) where he refutes the Donatists, who like the Protestants, took refuge in an invisible church. "You are not in the mountains of Sion; because you are not in the city set upon a hill; which has this *certain sign*, that it cannot be hid."

church, who, being persons in public office, must consequently be exposed to the view of all; whereas in the place referred to, he instructs the faithful in their private capacities, whose duties in this respect are of a different nature. Or rather we may say with St. Gregory, that both pastors and people are here commanded to let their light shine before men by good works, but below they are cautioned not to seek in the performance of them human applause, but solely the glory of God. "Whatever we do, let us do it," says he, so "as not to seek or desire human applause. Let the good work be done publicly, but so that the intention may be secret: thus we may by our good works give example to others, and excite them to do the same: and yet, by our pure intention of seeking only to please God, desire they should be known only to him." —(St. Greg. hom. ii. in Evang.) Jesus next answers the objections which might be urged against the preceding doctrine. "Do not imagine," says he, "that," in giving these new instructions, "I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy them, but to fulfil them." For as to the moral precepts of the law, these I elucidate by pointing out their extent, by adding what is wanting to their perfection, and by bestowing the graces necessary for their observance. As to the ceremonial precepts of the law, I bring the truth and reality, of which they were but figures; and thus instead of annulling, I rather fulfil them. "For, amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass" away, "one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled" which it contains, both in the complete verification of its figures, as well as by a perfect compliance with all its precepts. This shows that all the figures of the old law, i. e. of the Old Testament, began to be accomplished only at the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the end and object of the law. From this necessary fulfilment of the law he draws two conclusions. The first is against those who annul the letter of the law. "He, therefore, that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, from which he shall be for ever excluded. But they that do and teach" all that the law ordains, "shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The second conclusion he draws against those who, observing the letter of the law, destroyed the spirit of it, which was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees: but Christ assures us that this their practice will be no excuse for us, if we imitate them. "For I tell you," says he, "unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This last conclusion opens to Jesus a wide field, and he thence takes occasion to enter into a more circumstantial detail of such precepts as he judges proper to add to the express letter of the law, and to point out such parts as were defective, both in the doctrine and practice of the Pharisees, especially with relation to murder, adultery, perjury, revenge, and what regards the love of our neighbour. 1st. In regard to murder, Christ says to his hearers: "You have heard, that it was said to them of old; thou shalt

not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that not only he who murders, but whosoever is angry with his brother," without cause,* "shall be in danger of the judgment" appointed for lesser offences. "And whosoever shall say to his brother, raca," or any injurious word, "shall be in danger of the council," or sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy-two persons, where the highest causes were tried. "And whosoever shall say thou fool," with contempt, spite, or malice, "shall be in danger of hell fire.† If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar (and the same is to be said of a christian about to receive the sacred body of Christ), and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother,‡ and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift. And when thou goest with thy adversary to the ruler, make an agreement speedily, whilst thou art in the way" of this life, "and endeavour to be delivered from him, lest perhaps he draw thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison," either of purgatory or hell. "I say to thee thou shalt not go out thence, until thou pay the very last mite."§ We may consider the present life as a way in which we are travelling towards eternity. Our adversary is an evil conscience, which reproaches us with our guilt, or it may be the divine justice which demands vengeance of it. God himself is the Judge. If therefore we do not satisfy our adversary, by true repentance, during this life, while we are in the way, when we come to die, and are presented before the judge, we shall be condemned to the prison of purgatory or of hell, where we must remain till by our sufferings we have fully satisfied the divine justice for the debt we owe, even to the last farthing. Jesus now passes to the sixth commandment, which the Pharisees restrained to the outward action itself. "You have heard," says he, "that it was said to them of old: thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you," that this extends likewise to sinful desires, and "that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Under the sense of seeing Christ comprises all the steps and incitements which lead to sin: and under the word adultery, all other sins of impurity. "And if thy right eye scandalize thee," and become an occasion of sin, "pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is expedient for thee, that one of thy members should perish rather than the whole body be cast into hell: and if thy right hand scandalize thee," and cause thee to sin, "cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that the whole body go into hell." Here, by the hand and the eye, the dearest and most necessary parts of the body, Christ understands all those persons,

* These words are found in almost all the Greek MSS.

† Gr. Gehenna of fire. Gehennon was the valley of Hinnon, near to Jerusalem where human victims were burnt in honour of the idol Moloch. In that place was a perpetual fire, on which account it is made use of by our Saviour (as it has been ever since,) to express the fire and punishments of hell.

‡ The meaning is not that we are bound always to go personally to the offended party, but that we be willing in mind and heart to be reconciled, to forgive every one, and to seek peace with all men.

§ This was a small brass coin.

even the nearest and dearest of our connections, who are the occasion of sin; and he commands us to break off all communication with such as these without delay or demur. "It hath also been said; whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce," or a writing by which he declares that he repudiates her, and gives her full liberty of taking another husband. "But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting for the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." This sentence has two parts, in reference to the law of divorce, as explained by the Pharisees. 1. Christ allows a separation from bed and board, but only in the case of adultery, whereas the Pharisees extended the lawfulness of it to many capricious and fanciful cases. 2. After admitting the lawfulness of a divorce in the above-mentioned case, the bond of marriage still remains undissolved; for what God has joined no man can separate; whereas the Jews, after having repudiated their wives, scrupled not to marry again, allowing likewise to their former wives a similar liberty, The text indeed in St. Matthew xix. 6. is somewhat obscure, but the ambiguity is removed, and the true sense ascertained, by this and other clear and decisive texts of Scripture on this subject. * Hence the Church of God has never understood the above exception as implying a dissolution of the bond of marriage, or as in any respect allowing the innocent party to marry again, but, on the contrary, has condemned, in the strongest terms, those who teach a different doctrine. If any one, says the council of Trent,* shall say that the Church is mistaken, in having taught and in teaching, according to the evangelical and apostolical doctrine, that the bond of marriage cannot be dissolved by the adultery of either of the parties, and that both, or even the innocent party, who gave no cause to the adultery, cannot contract another marriage whilst the other party is alive and that he is guilty of adultery, who, putting away the adulteress, marries another, as is also she who, leaving the adulterer, marries another, let him be anathema.

Jesus now proceeds to the subject of oaths, and condemns the rash, hasty use which the Jews made of them. "Again you have heard that it was said to them of old: thou shalt not forswear thyself, but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you not to swear at all," except in an important and necessary case, "neither by heaven for it is the throne of God, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King," the seat of his empire and religious worship. "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black:" and so of other creatures, we are forbid to swear by them, because of the near connection which exists between them and their Creator. "But let your speech," says Christ, "be yes, yes,; no, no: and that which is over and above these proceedeth from evil," i. e. from the bad dispositions of men's hearts, of whom some are mistrustful and incredulous, others are liars and dissemblers. He condemns

* St. Matt. xix 9. St. Luke xvi. 18. St. Paul Rom. vii.

* Sess. 24. can. 7.

not oaths in themselves, nor says they are evil; but only that they spring from an evil principle. This suffices to render them unlawful when unnecessary, and to justify them where necessity calls for them. For there are some things, the origin of which may be vicious, and the use nevertheless innocent and harmless. Our Blessed Lord having enforced the reverence which we ought to bear towards God, and also towards his creatures, in the use of oaths, and having likewise recommended simplicity and moderation in our conversation, proceeds to some other precepts regarding our carriage to our neighbour, such as were also misinterpreted by the Pharisees, and transgressed in common practice. He says to them: "You have heard it has been said: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" * from whence your doctors have inferred, that revenge is allowable in proportion to the injury received. "But I say to you not to resist evil," by revenging yourself of him who hath done evil to you; "but if one strikes thee on the right cheek, turn to him also the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him," rather than enter into litigation, "because the greatest loss is that of peace and mutual charity." But we must not conclude from hence, that it is unlawful for the injured party to have recourse to the laws when he cannot otherwise have justice done him; for if this were the case, the public good of society, as well as of private individuals, would be materially affected. What our Lord therefore designed to inculcate in the present instance, was a general lesson of meekness and patience under injuries, in opposition to a revengeful disposition and rigorous retaliation of every wrong. He thus proceeds: "And whosoever will force thee one mile," to help him on his journey, "go with him other two," rather than lose thy patience and be wanting in charity. "Give to every one that asketh thee," when in real necessity, "and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away. And of him that taketh away thy goods, demand them not again," in the courts of justice, with the view of inflicting punishment on him. "And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner."

After having thus discoursed concerning revenge, Jesus is led by the affinity of the subject to treat of the necessity of suppressing all hatred. "You have heard," says he, "that it hath been said: thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. * But" this latter part is only a false gloss which the doctors have added to the law: "I say to you, love your enemies," bless them that curse you, "do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." It is only by thus imitating his goodness, that you can hope one day to partake of his glory. "For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have; do not even the Publicans the same? Even sinners love

* Ex. xxi. 24. Lev. xxxiv. 20.

* Lev. xix. 18.

those that love them, and if ye do good to them who do good to you, what thanks" are due "to you? for sinners also do this: and if you lend to them, of whom you hope to receive, what thanks" or reward, "are" due "to you? for sinners also lend to sinners, that they may receive an equivalent. And if you salute your brethren only what do you more? do not also the heathens the same? But love ye your enemies, do good and lend" to the necessitous, "hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect," that is, be always tending to perfection; and this will appear in your meekness, in your goodness and charity; and above all, in a profound humility, which alone can ensure to you the merit of your good works.—These sublime lessons of our Lord, though not strictly obligatory in all cases, are equally conducive to our happiness as to our perfection. If we follow them in the practice of our lives, we shall by a little suffering, always preserve a firm peace and tranquility of mind, whilst resistance and contention terminate only in hatred and desires of revenge. Beside, we shall frequently, by our forbearance and condescension, gain over our brother, * and thus receive voluntarily from him that recompense and compensation which violent measures could never obtain: at least, this we are sure of, that our heavenly Father will one day abundantly recompense us for all those sufferings which we now submit to for his sake, and with the intention of preserving mutual peace and concord. Lastly these heroic practices of humility and patience, as they shew a contempt of earthly things, as not worth contending for, so they evince a desire of suffering in conformity to our crucified Lord, and will therefore, by a perfect Christian, be considered rather as favours to be embraced, than as evils to be avoided.

CHAPTER XLII.

CONTINUATION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—OF ALMS-DEEDS, PRAYER, AND FASTING, ETC. MATT. VI.

OUR Lord, having thus expounded the true extent of several precepts, proceeds further to instruct his Apostles, and all his followers, in the right manner of performing their good works in general, especially those three great Christian duties of prayer, alms-deeds, and fasting. The Pharisees, it seems, vitiated all their good works by doing them from human motives, and merely out of vanity and ostentation. Our Blessed Saviour therefore cautions his Apostles and followers against this defective and mercenary intention, lest by it they lose the fruit of all their good actions. "Take heed," says he, "that you do not your justice;"†

* Matt. xviii. 15.

† *Elecmosynen, your alms*, which seems to be the sense in this place. Some Greek copies have *dikaiosynen, your justice*, but the sense appears the same, for alms are

that is, your good works, "before men, to be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven;" for he recompenses only in the next life what is done for his sake in this. "Therefore, when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou givest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth;" that is, observe an inviolable secrecy in regard to others, and even, if it were possible, with regard to thyself. "That thy alms may be in private, and thy Father who seeth in private, will repay thee" before men and angels at the last day.

Having thus described the right method of giving alms-deeds, Jesus next proceeds to the subject of prayer, and corrects two abuses; the first of which was common to the Pharisees, and the other to the heathens. "And when ye pray," said he, "you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee before all. Jesus here finds fault with that depraved intention in praying, which originates from a desire of attracting the notice and admiration of men, but by no means does he blame public prayers, such as are offered up to God in places set apart for the divine worship. Such public prayers have ever been the practice both of the Jews and Christians; and certainly to join in prayer with a whole congregation, cannot be said to attract the notice or admiration of individuals. Our Lord then proceeds in the following manner: "And when thou art praying, speak not much as the heathens, for they think they are heard by reason of their speaking much.* Be not therefore like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask him." This admonition relates to the Pagans, who, in an infinite multiplicity of words and flowing language, displayed their miseries and wants, and reasoned with the Divinity upon the subject of their requests, painting them in the most lively colours, as if they would instruct God respecting their necessities, and obtain redress by the display of their eloquence. However, we must not imagine that Christ here condemns long prayers in themselves, since he himself, for our instruction, was accustomed to pass whole nights in prayer; it is only against vain and idle repetitions, void of the spirit of devotion that he here cautions us. The Greek word signifies to babble or trifle. In lieu of this erroneous practice. he substitutes a perfect model of prayers, which in few words comprises all that we should ask of God, and places each thing to be asked for in its

* Jesus recommends, by his own example, the frequent use of prayer. For he undertook nothing, and did nothing, without previously having recourse to it. He prayed in the temple, Luke xix. 47. He prayed in the desert, Mark i. 35. Luke v. 16. He prayed in the mountains, Matt. xiv. 23. Luke vi. 12. He prayed in private houses, Matt. xix 13. Luke xi. 1. He prayed before the election of his Apostles, Luke vi. 12. He prayed previously to the performance of his miracles, Matt. xiv. 19. John vi. 11. He prayed after baptism and before his transfiguration, Luke iii. 21. c. ix. 28. He prayed in the garden, Matt. xxvi. 36. 39. 42. 44. In short, when and where did he not pray?—Pouget, t. 2. p. 521.

proper rank. "You shall pray therefore in this manner," says he: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our supersubstantial bread:* and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, amen," † This prayer, which is called by Tertullian a Summary of the whole Gospel, and by St. Cyprian, a Compendium of heavenly Doctrines, is truly the prayer of the children of God, and may be divided into a preface and a recital of our several wants and petitions. In the preface we mention the two foundations upon which the success of our petitions is grounded: the first is the goodness and mercy of God which we supplicantly acknowledge, by styling him our Father: the second is his infinite power, which we profess by adding, that he dwells in heaven; and these two attributes of God, viz. his goodness and his power, we consider as necessary for obtaining the effect of our prayers: for what could we expect from the goodness of God, unless it were omnipotent, or from his power, unless it were accompanied with mercy?

Of the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer, the three first refer to the glory of God, the four others to our own wants.

1. We petition for the increase of God's glory, when we ask that his name may be hallowed; that is, that he may be known, feared, loved, and adored by us, and by all the nations of the earth; not merely by words of praise and homage, but chiefly by a purity and holiness of life, which give glory to his holy name. For as the innocent and virtuous lives of Christians redound to the glory of God by the impression they make on those who witness them; so on the contrary, when their lives are wicked, they occasion God's holy name to be blasphemed by infidels.

2. We petition for the increase of God's glory, when we beg that his kingdom may come to be established throughout the world. This kingdom is begun at present in our souls by grace, and will be perfected hereafter in glory, when Christ shall have vanquished all his enemies, and shall reign triumphant over his elect for all eternity.

3. We petition for the increase of God's glory, when we ask of him, that his will, which is declared to us in his commandments, in his counsels and prohibitions, may be as perfectly obeyed upon earth by us and by all mankind, as it is by the angels in heaven: a petition which pre-supposes the necessity of God's grace, to enable us to perform whatever is pleasing to him.

4. As to our several wants and necessities, we first petition for our cor-

* So it is at present in the Latin text, yet the same Greek word in St. Luke is translated *daily bread*, as we say it in our Lord's prayer, and as it used to be said in the second or third age, according to Tertullian and St. Cyprian. Perhaps the Latin word supersubstantialis, may bear the same sense as daily bread, or the bread of which we daily stand in need, and which is daily *added* to maintain and support the *substance* of our bodies; or rather, we may understand it of the supernatural bread of the blessed eucharist, the true bread of life which nourishes our souls.

† None of the Latin fathers make mention of the addition in the Greek *for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever, Amen.* They are not cited by any Gr. writer before St. Chrysostom, as even Grotius takes notice, nor are they to be found in the Arabic, nor in the Vatican Greek copy, nor in the Cambridge MSS. as Dr. Wells observes. Hence it seems certain, that they were taken from the Greek Liturgies, being only a pious conclusion or doxology, similar to the *Glory be to the Father, &c.* which was added to the end of each psalm.

poral food, but we ask for nothing beyond what is necessary for our sustenance. As to our souls, we ask for the bread of truth, of grace, and of the word of God, and both for our bodies and our souls we ask for the bread of the holy Eucharist, that is, the sacred body of Jesus Christ, the true support and nourishment of our souls here, as well as the pledge and germ of our future resurrection to glory hereafter.

5. In the fifth petition, we beg that our debts, that is, our sins and offences, may be remitted to us, that we may be reinstated in God's grace, which either totally or in part we have lost by sin; and in order to prevail with God to grant our request, we profess our readiness to comply with the condition he requires of us, which is that of previously granting a full forgiveness to all such as have trespassed against us.

6. After praying to be delivered from past, we next beg to be preserved from future sins, and to be victorious over all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh.

7. Lastly, we pray to be delivered from all those evils which are the just punishment of sin, whether they regard body or soul, this world or the next. Hence, as to this life, we beg of God to grant us mercy of those scourges which we have reason to apprehend from his justly provoked anger; as to the next life, we pray that he would not give us up to those evil spirits, who are the ministers and executioners of his justice. Jesus then repeats the condition on which we may hope to receive forgiveness of our sins, thereby to confirm more forcibly what he had asserted above. "For if you forgive others their offences," says he, "your heavenly Father will also forgive you your sins. But if you will not pardon men, neither will your Father pardon you your sins. Jesus next proceeds to the subject of fasting, and he directs his disciples to lay aside that appearance of grief and sadness which the Pharisees affected on their fasting days. "And when you fast," says he, "be not as the hypocrites sad; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face," as on other days, "that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee," in the face of the whole world.

Jesus having thus given us rules for the more perfect performance of the three good works of prayer, alms-deeds, and fasting, by directing us to seek in them God's glory instead of human applause, next proceeds to rectify the erroneous sentiments and principles of mankind, respecting riches, the motives of our actions, worldly solicitude, and rash judgments. As to riches he says: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moths consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But" by distributing your wealth to the poor and employing it in good works "lay up to yourself treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume; and where thieves do not break through nor steal." This precept of Jesus is grounded on the principle, that mankind ought to lay up eternal treasures, on which they may subsist for ever, and that it is the

heighth of imprudence in immortal beings to provide no otherwise for their eternal subsistence, than by treasuring up goods of the most perishable nature.—A second reason is drawn from the danger of attaching our hearts to earthly pursuits. "For where thy treasure is," says Christ, "there is thy heart also." In effect experience shows, that they who hoard up earthly treasures, think of nothing but of the earth, and with difficulty raise up their minds to objects more deserving their esteem; whilst, on the contrary, such as lay up treasures in heaven, form no wishes but for heaven, where all that is dear and precious to them is kept in the manner of a sacred deposit for their eternal benefit. Jesus, then, desirous to make us understand how important it is to act with a pure intention, makes use of this comparison: "the light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be" pure and "single, thy whole body shall be lightsome; but if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome." In this figure, the eye, which enlightens us, is the intention which we form, and which is either good or bad; if it be good and direct us to the end by lawful means, then the whole body of the action and our whole lives become holy and pleasing in the sight of God. On the contrary, if the end and intention be evil, in vain do we employ such means as are lawful: the whole body of the action will be vicious in the sight of God, because the evil which it contains, corrupts that part which would otherwise have been good, and the good part does not rectify what is vicious in its nature.—Hence he proceeds to show how corrupt and vitiated that action must be which is bad in itself, and which moreover proceeds from a bad motive and intention. If then the light that is in thee, be darkness;" says he, "the darkness itself how great shall it be?" In other words, how extremely vitiated must that action be, which, in its own nature, is vicious, and which likewise originates from a depraved motive or intention? "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. "If then thy whole body be lightsome, having no part of darkness; the whole shall be lightsome, and as a bright lamp that enlightens thee." That is, take heed lest that which you take for light, viz. for the principle of your conduct, be not darkness itself, and the result of false maxims. But, on the contrary, if your whole body, if all that you are, your mind, your will, your senses, and your prevailing inclination, be so enlightened by the beams of justice and of rectitude, that concupiscence mingles nothing of its darkness and corruption, then all which shows itself outwardly, will be lightsome; the thoughts, the desires, intentions, words, and actions will all partake of that same light of justice, and this single eye will enlighten you in a manner as clear as if a burning lamp shone before all your steps.

Jesus now proposes another argument against the inordinate love of riches. "No man can serve two" opposite "masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will sustain the one and despise the other." Thus "you cannot serve God and Mammon:" * for their commands

* Mammon was the god of riches among the heathens. Tert.

are diametrically opposite. God enjoins us not to hoard up riches, but to make good use of them, whilst, on the contrary, avarice leads us to disobey and despise God for the sake of filling our coffers. It is evident that two extremes so opposite to each other cannot both be complied with. Hence he concludes that we must not be solicitous even for the wants of this present life, which are the usual pretexts by which men cover their avarice. "Therefore I say to you: be not solicitous for your life what you shall eat, nor for the body what you shall put on. Is not your life more than your meat, and your body more than raiment." * Wherefore he who has given you life, will not refuse you meat, and he who has given you a body, will not deny you raiment. "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you" his children "of much more value than they?" Wherefore fear not lest he should abandon you. "And" moreover what will this fear avail you? For "which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? and for raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they labour not, neither do they spin: But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be ye not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek," as having no faith or knowledge of divine providence. But do you banish such anxiety and disquietude: "for the Father knoweth that you have need of all these things," and his paternal goodness will not suffer you to be in want of them. "Seek therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added to you. Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow, for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;" and hence you must not, by vain disquietudes, torment yourselves with the apprehension of future evils, which you suffer not at present, and which perhaps you will never have to suffer. In this instruction Christ condemns not a reasonable foresight as to the wants and necessaries of life, but only forbids that anxious and restless solicitude which takes the alarm at every thing, which trusts not in Providence, but in all things relies solely upon its own ever watchful endeavours.

As there is a natural propensity in man to censure and condemn the actions of others, Jesus cautions us against this uncharitable disposition; contrasting it with the virtue of charity, which by a commendable gradation begins with carefully avoiding all possible injury to our neighbour, and ends with doing him all the good in our power. "Judge not," says Christ, "and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shal not be condemned; forgive, and you shall be

* Our Lord shows us that even the necessaries of life are to be sought after with such indifference as shall leave us time and thought for providing for a better life; if they do not, they are sinful, and as destructive as any other sins or sinful pleasures.

forgiven. For with what judgment you have judged, you shall be judged; and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again." This rule, which God will most certainly follow, ought surely to restrain that liberty which we so often take of rashly judging and condemning others. On the contrary, be liberal to your neighbours; freely give to the necessitous, "and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall they give into your bosom. And he spoke also to them a similitude," to show the arrogant presumption of the Pharisees, and of those ignorant persons who set themselves for teachers of mankind, and delude the people by their false maxims. "Can the blind lead the blind? Do not they both fall into the ditch?" And he confirmed this by another proverb no less common than the preceding one, viz. "The disciple is not above his master: but every one shall be perfect if he be as his master;" showing that those who followed the Scribes and Pharisees as their teachers, were not likely to have better sentiments and principles than they had. "And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye," i. e. a small defect in his morals: "but the beam that is in thine own eye," a great enormous crime in thy own interior, "thou considerest not, Or how canst thou say to thy brother: Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thine own eye. Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye." Correct first thy own greater faults, and then think of censuring the less failings of others; cure thyself of that insatiable avarice, of that lurking pride, of that base jealousy, of those secret unclean practices, and thou wilt more clearly see and be better qualified to direct thy brother, and point out to him his smaller faults and transgressions.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FURTHER CONTINUATION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. MATT. VII. LUKE VI. AND VII.

THE conclusion of this divine discourse consists of an exhortation to a life of piety, and contains several advices, some of which chiefly regard pastors' others indiscriminately all the faithful in general.

First, Jesus cautions all pastors, and such as preach the Gospel, not to subject the holy mysteries of religion to the scoffs and derision of the impious, nor by that means expose their own persons to danger of being contemned and persecuted by them. "Give not that which is holy to the dogs;" * says he, "neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and

* Sacraments are not for such as, like dogs, are continually returning to their former sins, or like swine wallowing in impurity.

turning upon you, they tear you."

Jesus next gives various instructions to the rest of the faithful, relative to the working out their salvation, and they are such as naturally result from the doctrine which he has hitherto set forth. Of these some regard the means of salvation, others treat concerning the obstacles to it. The first means is prayer, of which he says: "Ask and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you," expressing hereby the great success to be expected from earnest and fervent prayer. "For every one that asketh," says he, "receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him," in a proper manner.

The second means of salvation, is a strict equity and uprightness in regard to our neighbour, arising from a happy mixture of charity and justice, in which consists the very essence of the Evangelical doctrine. "All things therefore," says he, "whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them; for this is the law and the prophets." He however supposes, as a necessary condition, that the intention as well as the action itself be virtuous, and proceed from a motive of divine love.

The third means of salvation is to enter by the narrow gate and to walk in the narrow way, in opposition to the easy broad way of the world. "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat." This implies, that in our general conduct throughout life, as well as in each individual action, where any doubt arises, we should uniformly resolve upon that which is most just, holy, and the safest in practice. We must here remark, that in the scripture style, to walk, means to live; the way wherein we walk, is the life we lead; the gate through which we enter, is the first commencement of our lives. Jesus styles the way which he directs us to follow, the narrow way, and it is rendered such by the narrow and confined limits of the divine law; for as on the one hand, this law is uniform and inflexible in its decisions, so on the other, the constant observance of them is extremely difficult, owing to the bent of our natural corruption, which draws us with great violence to a life free from constraint. It is this extreme difficulty which causes Jesus to cry out, as it were in astonishment: "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!" On the contrary, by the broad road and the wide gate, is meant that liberty which mankind allow themselves of following all the corrupt inclinations of nature, as well in those instances where they are implicitly followed without a thought or a scruple, as in others, where, in order to avoid the appearance of sin, a fallacious casuistry is invented, purposely calculated to flatter such consciences as are not unwilling to be deceived.

Hence the fourth means of salvation

is, carefully to avoid false prophets or teachers, who by their erroneous doctrines lead their followers into the broad road of perdition. Jesus describes briefly the danger there is of being deceived by the outward show of piety, and, at the same time, gives marks whereby they are to be known. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep," i. e. putting on the outward garb of truth and virtue, such as a great zeal for the scriptures, a meekness of speech, abundance of consoling words, and assurances of salvation, together with a recommendation of good works: "but" notwithstanding this outward show, "inwardly they are ravenous wolves," having no other view but to devour the flock of Jesus Christ, by enticing the sheep out of the fold, i. e. out of the bosom of the Catholic Church.

He now gives to his disciples a certain mark whereby to discern these wolves. This is, to examine them not merely by the doctrine they outwardly announce, since the truth of this very doctrine is the subject in question, nor yet by their individual actions, however apparently virtuous: for these being a part of the wolves' clothing, may easily impose upon the simple and well-meaning Christian; but by the fruits and effects of their doctrine, which are ever false and leading to damnation. In effect no heresy as yet started up which has not occasioned schisms in the Church, raised the flames of war in the state, introduced a depravity of morals, made divisions in private families, and frequently spread desolation throughout the Christian world. Hence our Blessed Saviour says: "By their fruits you shall know them; for there is no good tree that bringeth forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor from a bramble bush do they gather the grape? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruit you shall know them. A good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

The fifth means of salvation is, to unite a sound faith with good works; and Jesus here describes the different lot of those who have faith alone without good works, and of such as unite them both together. To the former he says: "And why do you call me Lord, Lord: and do not the things which I say? Not every one that saith to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he" only "that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me you that work iniquity;" words which ought to make all those pastors tremble with

a salutary fear, who having cast out devils, either from the souls of the faithful by the sacrament of baptism and penance, or from their bodies by exorcism, yet neglect to labour sincerely in the sanctification of their own souls.

But the lot of those persons who support their faith by good works, is very different from that of the former; and Jesus paints their prudent conduct and constancy by a comparison with which he closes this long discourse. "Every one that cometh to me and heareth my words, and doth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like to a wise man who building a house, digged deep, and laid the foundation upon a rock; and an inundation coming, the torrent beat against that house, but could not shake it. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." In this parable, the foundation of the building is, a true faith in Jesus Christ; to erect a building upon this foundation, is to do as well as to believe; it is to join the performance of good works to a sound faith. The winds which blow are those trials which we undergo from the defamatory or abusive language of our adversaries, from unjust laws, unlawful commands, threats, promises, or verdicts affecting our reputation. The rains are the beginning of persecutions: torrents and floods represent popular tumults and persecutions venting themselves with great violence upon the innocent in a variety of torments, even unto death. The trial of the last day will consist in that fire which will consume and purify the world in lieu of the winds, storms, and floods. In vain will all these fall upon that man whose faith shall be firmly established by good works. He then views unmoved and unhurt the violence of the storm directed against him.

Jesus now contrasts the happiness of such a Christian with the miserable condition of one who listens indeed to his words, but reduces them not to practice. "And every one that heareth these my words and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand, without a foundation, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof:" because the faith of this man being destitute of good works, had nothing to defend it from the temptations and trials assaulting it, it consequently cannot stand the trying fire of the last judgment; and hence, notwithstanding his faith, such a one must eternally perish. "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these discourses in the hearing of the people, they were struck with admiration at his doctrine.* For he taught them as one having authority, and not as their Scribes and Pharisees," who depended upon the art of reasoning and human literature.

* May this excellent abridgment of thy doctrine, O Jesus, be the rule of my manners, and the pattern of my life. Amen.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CHRIST CLEANSES A LEPER,* AND RETIRES INTO THE WILDERNESS TO PRAY
MATT. VIII. MARK I. LUKE V.

"AND when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and it came to pass when he was in † a certain city," named Capharnaum, "behold a man full of leprosy, came, and falling on his face adored him, beseeching him; and kneeling down, he said to him: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." This prayer, though short, admirably expresses the sentiments which ought to animate us when we address ourselves to the Almighty: it is humble and modest, as appears by the leper's suppliant posture. It proceeds from a strong faith, which acknowledges the omnipotence of Jesus in the cure of all diseases. Lastly, his request is not peremptory but conditional: he makes the success thereof to depend, not upon the merit of his own faith, nor on the urgency of his prayer, but entirely on the will of Jesus: If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. The success which attended this petition is an encouragement for us to pray with the like dispositions. "And Jesus having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand, and touching him" without fear of uncleanness, "said I will be thou made clean. And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean: and threatening him, he forthwith sent him away," lest his longer stay might attract the notice of the by-standers: and to caution us still more against vanity and ostentation, "he charged him," saying "see thou tell no one, but go show thyself to the high-priest,* as the law prescribes, and offer," in acknowledgment, "for thy cleansing, the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to" convince "them," that all power is given to me from God as the promised Messiah, and that I make use of this power for the accomplishment of the law. "And he being gone out," no longer thought himself bound to the secresy which his benefactor had recommended, but from motives of gratitude, "began to publish and blaze abroad the word; and his fame was the more spread about, so that he could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places, and they flocked to him from all sides, to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities; and he retired" far-

* As the three Evangelists relate the cure of a leper nearly in the same words and with the same circumstances, we may conclude that they speak of the same miracle. St. Matthew alone seems to have observed the time and order of this transaction, viz. after the Sermon on the Mount; the other two anticipate it.

† That is, when he was just entering Capharnaum, for lepers were not allowed te enter into any city.

* By the high-priest we are to understand, not the chief high-priest, but only him who, at that time, was charged with the office of examining lepers. The officiating priests are sometimes styled high-priests by the Evangelists. See likewise Lev. xiii. 2, 3. &c. The Greek has only *to the priest.*

ther "into the desert and prayed."

While we admire, on this occasion, the goodness and power of Jesus exerted in favour of an unfortunate leper, let us remember that he is equally ready to heal the leprosy of the soul as he was formerly to heal that of the body. The leprosy of the soul is sin; and if we desire to be cured of it, we must apply to Jesus with faith, with confidence, and with an humble and contrite heart. He has instituted the sacrament of penance, and given power to the priests of the new law, to judge of this spiritual leprosy, as it belonged formerly to the Jewish priests to take cognizance of corporal leprosy. The power of Catholic priests is even more extensive than was that of the Jewish ministers: these were only to witness the cure, the former are to effect it by the power which Christ left to his Church, when he said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, &c."

CHAPTER XLV.

JESUS ADMIRES THE LIVELY FAITH OF THE CENTURION,* AND RESTORES TO HEALTH HIS ABSENT SERVANT. MATT. VIII. LUKE VII.

"And when he had entered Capharnaum, the servant of a centurion,* who was dear to him, was ready to die; and when he had heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the ancients of the Jews, desiring him to come and heal his servant, saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying to him: he is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue. And Jesus saith: I will come and heal him. And Jesus went with them: and when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent his friends to him, saying: Lord, give not thyself this trouble; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. For which reason neither did I esteem myself worthy to come to thee: but command with a word only, and my servant will be healed; for I," though "a man subject to authority," yet "having under me soldiers, I say to one: go, and he goeth; and to another; come, and he cometh; and to my servant; do this, and he doth it." If I therefore, though merely a subaltern officer, am so readily obeyed, both by soldiers and servants, how much more will obedience be paid to your commands, who art the Lord of all things. "Which Jesus hearing, wondered; and turning about to the multitude that followed him, he said: Amen, I say to

* A *centurion* was an officer who had the command of 100 men, and was much of the same rank as one of our captains.

* Some interpreters pretend that the history of the centurion mentioned by St. Matthew is different from that of St. Luke, but to us there appear not sufficient grounds for this opinion. Wherefore what St. Matthew says, that the centurion *came beseeching, &c.* is not to be understood as if he actually came himself to beseech Jesus: this he did only by others; first, by the ancients of the Jews, and then by his friends; for he thought himself unworthy to go to Jesus in person. Vide S. Aug. l. 2. de Cons. Evang. c. 20.



Raising the Widows Son.

you, I have not found so great a faith in Israel." Then taking occasion, from this circumstance, of a stranger and a Gentile becoming one of his believers, Jesus announced to his hearers two future events infinitely more astonishing: these were, first the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and second, the reprobation of the Jews. "And I say to you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom," that is, the Jews to whom belonged the heavenly kingdom, on account of their descent from the patriarchs, their vocation and the divine promises, "shall be cast out into exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion," * by his deputies; "go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee: and the servant was healed at the same hour. And they who were sent, being returned to the house, found the servant whole who had been sick."

The words of the centurion, by which he owned himself not worthy of a visit from Jesus Christ, have been adopted by the Church, as expressive of the humble and devout sentiments which ought to animate us, when about to receive a visit from Jesus Christ in the Holy communion. For many ages they have been consecrated to this solemn purpose, and ought by every communicant, to be repeated together with the priest. Happy those who, like the centurion, repeat them with sentiments of the most lively faith, of the most profound humility, and of the firmest confidence in the power and goodness of Jesus.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CHRIST RAISETH TO LIFE THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIM. LUKE VII.

"AND it came to pass afterwards, that he went into a city that is called Naim," from its pleasantness, situated upon the edge of the torrent at Cison, not far from Nazareth and Mount Thabor; "and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out" to be buried; (for in those times they usually buried without the walls of towns, in order to avoid the legal uncleanness, as well as the unwholesomeness of the contrary practice.) He had been snatched away in the flower of his youth, was "the only son of his mother: and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen," overwhelmed with grief, and bathed in tears, "being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her, weep not. And he came near and touched the bier: and they that carried it, stood still, and he said: young man, I say to thee, arise. And

* We here interrupt the relation of St. Matthew, who follows not the order of time. Having mentionod what happened at Capharnaum, after Christ's second return from Judea, he resumes the narrative of what passed immediately after his first return until his second arrival in Judea.

he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and he gave him to his mother. And there came a" religious "fear on them all, and they glorified God, saying, a great prophet is risen amongst us, and God has visited his people.* And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the country round about."

The holy fathers consider the sorrow which the mother displayed on this occasion for the death of an only son, as a figure of that tender love which the Church has for her children. With the warmest affection she embraces each one in particular, as if he were the only one, and with the hopes of seeing them hereafter raised to eternal life, consoles herself amidst the cares and afflictions that must necessarily befall her in this vale of tears The spiritual death of many of them is a subject to her of continual sorrow. With a heavy heart she sees her thoughtless children snatched from her arms by unruly passions, and hurried away by a train of sins towards the fathomless abyss. She mourns their misfortune, and implores the pity of her heavenly Spouse, that he may raise them again by his powerful grace. With that hope she comforts herself in her afflictions, and with a longing desire expects the hour which is to restore her repenting sons to life again. The repentance of a sinner gives joy not only to the Church on earth, but also to the saints and angels who are in heaven: for there "is joy in heaven upon the repentance of every sinner."

CHAPTER XLVII.

JESUS GIVES TESTIMONY IN FAVOUR OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.* MATT. XI. LUKE VII.

The fame of Christ's miracles was spread abroad, and had reached even the prison of Macheron, where John the Baptist was under confinement. "For his disciples told him of all these things" which Jesus had done, and not without visible marks of jealousy and emulation. "Now when John had heard these" wonderful "works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to him: art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" The design of John on this occasion, was to cure his disciples of their prepossessions against Jesus, and to convince them that he was the Messiah whom they expected. He was the more desirous of this, as he foresaw that his own death was now at hand. "And when the men were come unto him, they said; John the Baptist

* In these words the people of Naim seem to acknowledge Jesus for the Messiah, or that great prophet whom Moses had promised to the Jews, saying; "the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken." Deut. xviii. 15. For they describe this prophet in the very same terms that Zachary, the father of John Baptist, makes use of to denote the Messiah: *the Lord hath visited his people*, Luke i. 68.

* Agreeably to the order of St Luke, we insert here the deputation of St. John to Jesus. Not only this deputation but even the decollation of St. John must have preceded the mission of the apostles, as will be seen in chap. lv. But St. Matthew, who anticipates the mission, has immediately subjoined to it the legation.

hath sent us to thee, saying: art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" Instead of giving a direct answer, Jesus referred them to the plain evidence of his actions and miracles. For, "in that same hour, he cured many of their diseases, and hurts, and evil spirits; and to many that were blind he gave sight. And" then "answering" the disciples of John, "he said to them: go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached," and even with more success than to the rich.* As a particular rebuke to these deputies, who, out of jealousy, censured many of his actions, and indeed the whole tenor of his conduct, Jesus added: "and blessed is he whosoever shall not be scandalized in me." The whole of what Jesus said on this occasion, was not only an answer to the question proposed, whether he were the promised Messiah; it was also a decisive proof of it, since by establishing the certainty of his miracles, it unanswerably applied to him the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah.† It was, in fact, equivalent to an answer couched in the following terms: go and relate to your master John the Baptist, that with your own eyes you have seen fulfilled by me all those wonderful things foretold by the prophets concerning the Messiah.

"And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak to the multitudes concerning Johr:" this he did in the highest terms of commendation, lest the present deputation sent by John might weaken in their minds the testimony which he had formerly given in his favour. Jesus therefore pronounced a public eulogium of his precursor, both on account of his own eminent virtues, and the high quality of his employment. His virtues were, first, an unshaken firmness of mind, which did not dispose him to retract the high testimonies he had borne in his favour; and secondly, a wonderful austerity of life. As to the first, Jesus asked his hearers: "What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" In other words, was he a person of a fickle, irresolute temper, one who varied his opinion with the times? The contrary was clearly established by the actual situation of John, at the moment when Jesus was speaking. The unshaken firmness of his mind had brought upon him the persecution which he now suffered from the tyranny of Herod, whose incestuous marriage he could not be induced to approve. Jesus goes on thus to enquire of them: "But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are in costly apparel,* and live delicately, are" not like John in the wilderness, but "in the houses of kings." Jesus next proceeds to consider the high office of St. John as his precursor. "But what went you out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: be-

* The reason of this difference is, that the faith and hope of eternal goods require in those who receive them, humility, docility, and a mortification of the passions; which virtues are more generally found in the poorer class, than in those of higher rank and more opulent fortunes. A. Lapide.

† Isaiah xxxv. 45.

* This luxury in apparel and high living, is not now confined to courts; it is unfortunately but too prevalent in all ranks and conditions.

hold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. Amen, I say to you, there has not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist." This comparison, as appears from St. Luke, is solely made betwixt him and the ancient prophets, and signifies that John, as the immediate precursor of the Messiah, was equal, if not superior, to any of them. But Jesus adds, speaking of himself in the third person: "Yet he that is lesser" than John, and as it were his junior, "in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he." * This is what John himself had acknowledged at two different times. He that shall come after me, is preferred before me. [John, c. i. v. 15.] Jesus then proceeds as follows: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and those that use violence bear it away." Whereas, before his time, and during the whole period of the prophets, heaven was shut, now it is opened, and since the time of John's preaching repentance, it is offered to all men who will do violence to themselves by the mortification of their passions. Now, therefore, is the time appointed for the accomplishment of the prophecies. "For all the prophets and the law only prophesied until John;" that is, they only promised at a distance the good things which were to come: but since John's mission, these prophetic promises begin to be fulfilled: he has announced the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, and has pointed out Jesus, who is the King and Lord of it. "And if you will receive it," and will attentively consider the rigour of John's penance, the fervour of his zeal, the force of his preaching, and all the other circumstances of his life, "you will acknowledge that he is Elias that is to come," in order to announce the first coming of the Messiah, and to prepare mankind for his reception. And as the quality here ascribed to St. John is merely allegorical, inasmuch as he is the figure or image of the real Elias, whose coming at the end of the world is foretold by Malachi, Jesus adds: "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and understand this mystical language. "And all the people" in general, "and the Publicans hearing, praised the justice of God, being baptised with John's baptism;" that is they admired the wonderful conduct of the Almighty in appointing a precursor or fore-runner before the first, as well as before the last coming of the Messiah, purposely to prepare mankind for those great events, and to render them more fit to receive him by means of a sincere repentance. "But the Pharisees and the doctors of the law despised the designs of God toward themselves, not being baptised by him. And the Lord said: whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to whom are they like? They are like to children sitting in the market-place, who calling out to their companions" that were averse to join with them in their various games and pastimes, taxed them with ill-nature, saying: "we have piped to you, and you have not danced; we have lamented, and you have not mourned." This appears to

* The difficulty of this passage is, that Jesus apparently avows himself less in the kingdom of heaven than John the Baptist: but the difficulty vanishes if we place the comma after the word *lesser*, and read it thus: *He that is lesser, in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

have been a proverb among children at that time, and to have been taken from them; and nothing can be more apposite, than the application of it by Christ in the present instance. "For John the Baptist," says he, "came neither eating bread nor drinking wine: and you say he hath a devil. The son of man is come eating and drinking," as others; "and you say; behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners. And" yet, in this severity of John's manners, and in this humane condescension of Jesus Christ, the "wisdom" of God is justified" or approved and acknowledged to be equitable "by all her children," that is, by all those who are truly wise and disposed to see and receive truth; while others remain obstinate in their blindness, and refuse to believe in Christ. To the truly wise it will appear the effect of an all-wise Providence, that the fore-runner of Jesus should openly profess the practice of an extraordinary austerity, in order to give a greater sanction to that testimony he was to bear, and to render it perfectly unexceptionable. It will equally appear to be a wise appointment of the same Providence, that Jesus should lead a life by no means extraordinarily rigid, in order thereby to attract mankind to his service. "Then," taking occasion from this impenitence of the Pharisees, "he began to reproach the cities" of Galilee, "in which a great many of his miracles were wrought, because they had not done penance," but were shamefully ungrateful for all his favours. To Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum, he in particular denounced the greatest of woes in the following terms: "Wo to thee Corozain, wo to thee Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you," though Pagan cities, "they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes.* But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou Capharnaum, shalt thou," by thy riches and luxury, "be exalted up to the very sky?" No, "thou shalt go down even unto hell;† for if the miracles had been done in Sodom that have been wrought in thee," however infamous for its abominations, "it might have remained" entire "even until this day.‡ But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." From hence we may learn how dangerous it is to resist the divine graces, and to abuse those favourable opportunities which Providence affords us, of improving ourselves in virtue, and of securing our eternal salvation.

* St. Luke inserts these reproaches in the discourse which Jesus made to his seventy-two disciples, and which will be found in chap. 79; perhaps they occurred to his mind in consequence of those words of Christ to the seventy-two, *that it would be more tolerable for the Sodomites than for the city which should not receive them.* It appears more probable that St. Matthew here relates them in their proper place, when Jesus was yet in Galilee, and as it seems at Capharnaum, since he attacks this city in the most pointed manner. However, as Christ may have repeated the same comminations on different occasions, they are likewise given in chap. 79,

† Agreeably to this denunciation of our Lord, Capharnaum is at present so far from being the metropolis of all Galilee, as formerly, that it consisted long since of only six poor fishermen's cottages: and modern travellers assure us that it is now totally desolate. See Le Brune's Travels.

‡ What follows here in St. Matthew concerning the *mysteries which are hidden from the wise ones*, occurs in St. Luke after Christ's discourse to the seventy-two disciples, and with this indication of time; *at that very hour* he rejoiced. We have therefore transferred to that place the words of St. Matthew, who, as observed above, does not intend by the particle *at that time*, to point out the precise period of a transaction.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MARY MAGDALEN ANOINTS THE FEET OF JESUS.* LUKE VII.

WHILST Jesus was yet in Galilee, and probably at Naim, where he lately had raised to life the widow's son, he was invited to dinner by a certain Pharisee called Simon, who seems to have lived in the same town, or some neighbouring city, as Calmet shows. Our Lord was pleased to accept this invitation to confound the pride of the Pharisees, and chiefly that he might manifest the power of his grace in the wonderful conversion of an abandoned woman, who has ever since been considered as a most encouraging example and model of true penitence to all succeding generations. St. Luke gives us the following account of this illustrious penitent. "A certain Pharisee desired Jesus that he would eat with him; and being entered into the Pharisee's house, he was at table. And behold a woman who was in the city a sinner, as soon as she knew that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and standing behind at his feet,* she began to wash his feet with tears, and

* We place here the history of the sinful woman, as most harmonists have done before us. If however she be the same person as Mary the sister of Lazarus, this event must have happened at a different time and place. For Jesus was now in Galilee, whereas the sister of Lazarus dwelt in Bethania, near to Jerusalem. In this supposition St. Luke has not placed this history in due order of time, but anticipated it as an illustrious example of penance, agreeably to what Christ said of sinners and publicans being converted and baptized, whilst the Pharisees remained hardened in their sins. See c. 56. likewise c. 108. But whether this woman, whom St. Luke here calls a sinner, be the same as Mary Magdalen, and as Mary of Bethania, sister of Martha and Lazarus, (John xi. 2. cap xii. 1. Mark xiv. 3. Matt. xxvi. 6.) is an ancient celebrated question, which must ever remain undetermined, because nothing appears demonstrative from the Sacred Text, or from the authority of the ancient fathers. Many grave authors refer all that is mentioned in the Gospel to one and the same person, and this after St. Gregory's time, appears to have been the more common opinion down to the 16th century. On this side are Baronius, Jansenius of Ghent, Maldonatus, Nat. Alexander Lami, Mauduit, Solier the Bollandist. ¶ But St. Ambrose, St. Jer., St. Augustin, St. Thomas Aquinas, leave the question undecided. Others think these were three distinct persons; as Causaubon, Estius, Bulanger, Turrian, Tillemont, Hammond, &c. Others are only for two Marys, distinguishing Mary Magdalen from Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha, and this opinion we have adopted as the most plausible, with St. Chrysostom (Hom. 61. in Joan.) St. Jerome (in Matt. xxvi.) Soihard, Calmet, &c. For Magdalen attended Christ the last year of his life, and seems to have followed him from Gallilee to Jerusalem. when he came up to the Passover, (see Matt. xxvii. 59, 57. Mark xv. 40, 41) at which time the sister of Lazarus was with her brother and Martha at Bethania. (John xi. 1.) Moreover these two women seem to be distinctly characterized, the one being called Magdalen, and being ranked among the women that followed Jesus from Galilee, the other being every where called the *sister of Lazarus*. But St. Irenæus, Origen, and St. Chrysostom, &c. nowhere distinguish the *penitent* mentioned in this chapter from Magdalen. And St. Luke having here mentioned the conversion of the *sinful* woman in the next chapter, subjoins that certain women who had been delivered by him from evil spirits and infirmities, followed him, and amongst these he names Mary Magdalen; whence it seems reasonable to conclude that the penitent and Magdalen are the same person. In the Roman Breviary indeed, on the feast of Mary Magdalen, the history of all these three is given, and placed, as it were, in one point of view, as if they belonged to one and the same person; but this is only for our greater edification and instruction. And the offices are distinct in the Breviaries of Paris, Orleans, Vienne, Cluni, &c. See on this subject Calmet's Disser. Mauduit, Baronius, ad an. 32. § 17. Bollandus, July 22.

¶ The faculty of Paris likewise approved this opinion, an. 1521, as most agreeable to the Gospel and the established usage of the Church.

* In this she acted as a servant; for servants formerly stood behind, at their master's feet when at table, to receive their commands, See Seneca *de Beneficis* l. 3. epigram 23. Christ conformed to the prevailing custom of the Jews in his time, which was not to sit at table as we do, but to lean or lie down on couches raised from the ground, each of

wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed them with ointment," (The Greeks and Romans used likewise sweet scented perfumes at banquets.)

Behold here, in the conduct of Magdalen, the perfect model of a true penitent. From her heart she detested the past irregularities of her life; she was penetrated with shame and confusion for them, and placing herself behind Jesus, prostrate on the ground at his feet, she judged herself unworthy of appearing before him. She expressed her sorrow for her past crimes, and made a kind of public confession of them, by shedding abundance of tears, which flowed from a contrite heart. She does her utmost to satisfy for them, and now defaces or consecrates to penance whatever had formerly been an instrument of sin: her eyes, which had been full of dangerous charms, are now converted into fountains of tears to cleanse the stains of her soul. Her hair, once dressed in tresses and curls to ensnare souls, now hangs loose and dishevelled, and serves for a towel to wipe our Lord's feet. She kisses his feet as a public declaration of that chaste and holy love which now burned within her, as likewise to draw down upon her the grace of reconciliation, which the Scripture calls the kiss of peace. Lastly, she pours out upon the feet of Jesus the vessel of sweet perfumes, the odour of which quickly spread through the whole room, intimating hereby her firm intention of being as careful for the future to spread abroad the sweet odour of her virtues, as she had hitherto been intent upon the destruction of souls by her scandalous life. Moreover, by thus affectionately pouring out her perfumes, formerly the incentives of vice, she makes an offering as it were of her worldly goods, and showed the future use she meant to apply them to, viz. the relief of the poor, here represented by the feet of Jesus. In like manner every true penitent must consecrate his riches to Christ in the poor, which are his feet: he must employ his eyes in tears, and his lips in supplications for mercy, and must make all that serve to charity and mortification, which before was subservient to his inordinate self-love. These exterior offerings must be accompanied with the interior sacrifice of the heart, with an humble confidence in the divine mercy, with a lively faith and ardent love. It is thus a sinner may approach to Jesus and be reconciled to him.

Let us now see the reception which this humble penitent met with from our Redeemer. He had himself inspired her with these just dispositions, and had come to the Pharisee's banquet, exulting with holy joy, from the foreknowledge he had of her conversion: for the main spring of all he did and suffered on earth, was an insatiable thirst for the salvation of sinners; this brought him down from heaven, and was not to be satisfied but by his sufferings on the cross, and by the last drop of his blood there poured out for them. In these sentiments he had

each of which held three persons, whose heads were directed towards the table in the centre, whilst their feet projected into the room, Christ was likewise barefooted on this occasion, having put off his shoes and stockings, according to the custom of those times. See Balduinum de *Calcio antiquo* c. 11. and Juliam Nigronum *de Caliga*, c. 2. After washing Christ's feet with her tears, Magdalen wiped them with her hair, in which she demeaned herself below servants, for they were sometimes accustomed to wipe with their hair their master's hands, whereas she wipes the feet also.--See Petron. Satyr. Atrem.

before testified that it was his delight to converse with sinners, out of compassion for their miseries, and in order that he might draw them out of that gulf into which they had blindly plunged themselves. But "the Pharisee who had invited him, seeing it, said within himself: this man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner," and consequently he would not allow her to approach him in this manner. It was pride that betrayed the Pharisee on this occasion into rash judgment, and made him condemn as a grievous sinner one who was truly penitent. The same unhappy pride made him likewise blasphemously censure the goodness and mercy of our Redeemer. "And Jesus," in his own defence, meekly spoke the following parable; and "said to him: Simon, I have something to say to thee: he replied; speak, Master. There were two debtors to a certain creditor: the one owed him 500 Roman pence," about 9 pounds, "the other 50," or about 19 shillings, "and they having not wherewith to pay, he forgave both of them: which of them loved him more? Simon answered and said: I presume, he to whom he forgave more. And he said to him: thou hast judged rightly." Then Jesus showed, that under the title of the usurer he had represented himself; because he in fact places out to each individual those graces and talents which he expects should be improved, and made to fructify, that he may receive the produce with usury. Under the names of the two debtors therefore he described the Pharisee and the woman in question, each under the proportional share of a debt for which they stood bound to his justice, and consequently as she, from the sins of her past life, laboured under a load of debt, ten times greater than he did, so her gratitude in loving God was so much the greater in proportion as more was forgiven her. "And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon: dost thou see this woman," all bathed in tears? "I came into thy house, thou didst not give me water for my feet; but she hath watered my feet with tears, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Thou hast not anointed my head with oil; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say to thee: many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much:* but that person to whom less is forgiven, loveth less. And he said to her: thy sins are forgiven thee. And they who were at table together, began to say within themselves: who is this that even forgiveth sins?† And he said to the woman: thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." Mercy is the property and the favourite attribute of our divine Redeemer. Hence he assures this humble sinner that her offences were cancelled, and that her lively faith, animated by ardent charity, which drew from her eyes tears of repentance, had saved her, and ensured to her that solid and happy peace which

* Some interpreters understand these words, that much was forgiven this penitent, because her love and sorrow were great and sincere: others take the meaning to be, that gratitude would make her, after this mercy, more fervent in love. Each interpreter is undoubtedly true; but the first seems most agreeable to the context, as A. Lapide shows.

† Thus profane people speak when they deny that power which Christ has committed to his Church to forgive sins.

is the fruit of true repentance. The same motive of gratitude by which Magdalen was actuated for the grace of her conversion, ought to have no less weight with those who by God's singular grace have always preserved their innocence. For whether God shows mercy by pardoning sins, or by preventing them in us, we are totally indebted to him for the grace which we receive. Upon this grand principle, St. Austin addresses the Pharisee who despised this holy penitent in the following words: "O Pharisee! to say you are less indebted to the divine mercy, because less was forgiven you, is a capital ingratitude and pride. For by whom were you preserved from those crimes you did not commit? One who hath sinned much stands indebted for the gracious pardon of exceeding great debts; another who hath sinned less, owes to God the benefit that he hath not defiled himself with grievous sins. You have not fallen into adultery: but God saith to you: it is owing to me, who governed and protected you. If no tempter ever enticed you, this was the effect of my special care and providence in your favour. If you escaped the dangerous occasions from time and place, this likewise was ordained by me. Perhaps a temptation and an opportunity of sinning occurred: yet I withheld you by wholesome fear, that you did not consent to the evil. You are indebted to me for your preservation from all the crimes which you did not commit: for there is no sin that one committeth, which another might not commit, if he were not preserved by him who made him"

CHAPTER XLIX.

JESUS HEALS A POSSESSED PERSON WHO WAS BLIND AND DUMB.*
MATT. XII. MARK III. LUKE XI.

"And Jesus and his disciples came to a house," which was probably Peter's at Capharnaum, "and the multitude cometh together again" to hear the word of salvation, "so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his own people," who probably were his cousins or citizens from Nazareth who did not believe in him, "had heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, he is gone mad." It is not however certain who said this, whether his friends or enemies: if the latter, perhaps the Scribes and Pharisees might call him a madman, because he blamed their vices, and preached with such extraordinary zeal: if it be referred to his friends, they might endeavour to lay hold of him, to extricate him from the troublesome importunity of the crowd, not as if Jesus had lost his reason, but

* See the first dumb demoniac, chap. 36. the third chap. 68.

With this history St. Matthew resumes his narration of what happened after Jesus had returned a second time from Judea into Galilee. For as we mentioned above, chap. 39. this Evangelist had anticipated several particulars without observing the order of time. St. Luke, on the contrary, relates this event too far back, viz. after the mission of the seventy-two disciples; but without insinuating that it has any connection with what goes before. See chap. 82. note.

as if in danger of fainting* for want of food, and the close suffocating air that was occasioned by the great concourse of people. "Then was offered to him one possesssed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he cast out the devil and healed him, so that he spoke and saw. And all the multitude were amazed and said: is not this the Son of David," and the Messias who is to be born of his race? "But the Pharisees hearing it said: this man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the Prince of the devils. And the Scribes who were come down from Jerusalem said: he hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils.† And others tempting asked of him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, after he had called them together he said to them in parables," refuting these their blasphemous calumnies: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. How then can Satan cast out Satan? And if Satan cast out Satan" by my ministry, as you pretend, "he is divided against himself; and if Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" Since "if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. If Satan then be risen up against himself, he is divided and cannot stand, but is brought to an end. How then shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out?"* You will undoubtedly answer by the spirit of God. "Therefore they shall be your judges," and condemn you for attributing to the devil in my regard, what in them you acknowledge to come from the spirit of God. "Now if I in the finger of God," that is, "by the spirit of God cast out devils," as you would allow, were you but impartial, "then is the kingdom of God" announced and "come upon you;" since it is for the establishing this truth that I have performed all these miracles, whereof you have been witnesses.

The Pharisees urged against Jesus, that the devils drove out each other when he gave the word of command; and this they pretended was done by a sort of collusion amongst themselves, in order, by this artful manœuvre, to ensure him esteem and credit amongst mankind. It is perhaps in this man-

* The Greek word confirms this conjecture, *exeste* it occurs Gen, xiv. 26. Jos. ii. 11. Isa. vii. 2.—*He is transported too far.* Dr. Doddridge.—*To lay hold on him, kratesai auton*, i. e. *achlon*, according to same authors, who say that Christ's friends went out of the house where he was, to stop the multitude, and to tell them that he fainted for want of food.

† The Pharisees were afraid lest the greatness of Christ's Miracles and the excellence of his doctrine should put an end to their credit and authority among the people. Hence their calumnies against him.

Although St. Mark makes no mention of the possessed person that was blind and dumb, yet it appears by these and the following words which he relates together with St. Matthew and St. Luke, that he had the same history in view

* Some understand this of the Apostles, others of the friends of these Doctors of the law who were in the number of Christ's disciples, though not admitted into the college of the Apostles, and whom these Doctors durst not calumniate so far as to say they cast out devils in the name of Beelzebub. Others again, with more probability, explain this of the Jewish exorcists, who, according to Josephus, had learned from King Solomon the method of dispossessing demoniacs, by invoking the name of God. The same may be gathered from St. Justin Martyr and Origen against Celsus. Had the former been Christ's meaning the same objection would have held good against his disciples as against himself: and hence in another place he acknowledges their calumniating his disciples, in like manner as they had calumniated him. *If they have named the Master of the family Beelzebub, how much more also his servants.*

ner that antichrist one day may be enabled to drive out devils. But our Lord shows clearly, that the idea of such a collusion is in the present instance futile in the extreme, by the high tone of authority whereby he enforces their obedience to his commands. They disputed, if one may be allowed the expression, every inch of ground with him, unwilling to quit their hold without absolute and irresistible compulsion. Jesus explains this by the comparison of an armed man who continues in possession of his strong hold, till he be overcome by another of superior force. "And how can any one enter into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? and then he shall plunder his house." For "when a strong man," and "armed, guardeth his court, the things of which he is possessed are safe. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and distribute his spoils. Under this figure is represented the war which Jesus continually wages with his enemy the devil, here denominated the strong man. The hold or fortress possessed by the devil, is each soul that is enslaved to him by sin: over every such soul he enjoys a peaceable and undisturbed possession, so long as no resistance is made against him. The means which he employs for his security and defence, are temptations, the allurements of pleasure, bad habits, and inveterate customs. The spoils and trophies which he has acquired over these unhappy victims, refer to the victories which he has gained over their wills by their inordinate self-love, over their minds by the illusion of error, over their hearts by all the passions of concupiscence, and over their senses by the attractions of pleasure. The other armed man stronger than the former, and by whom he is overthrown, is Jesus Christ. Jesus throws his enemy to the ground and disarms him, by banishing or defeating all his temptations, by changing in the sinner a taste for pleasures and diversions into a salutary fear of God and a sorrow for past sins, and by breaking asunder the bonds of long contracted habits of vice. Lastly, he divides his spoils by reducing once more to order the several powers and senses of man; for he brings him to submit his mind to God by faith, his will to the influence of divine grace, his heart to the guidance of the superior will, his passions to reason, and each power to that particular virtue by which it ought to be directed. But how is all this to be effected, unless he enters into the house of the strong one, viz. into the soul of him who is a slave to the devil, in order thus to bind him fast in chains? Now this he performs before their eyes, when he expels the devil from the bodies and souls of possessed persons, since he delivers none of these corporally, without at the same time spiritually converting them to God.

Jesus Christ next proceeds to inform his followers, that in this warfare with the devil, no neutrality is allowed, but that each one must either espouse his party or that of his adversary. "He that is not with me," says Christ, "is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." But the Pharisees he accuses not only of refusing to labour

with him, but even of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, by their attributing to the devil those miracles which he evidently wrought by the Spirit of God. This is impugning the known truth, which certainly was the greatest of crimes, as Christ shows in the following words. "Therefore I say to you,* that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme: but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come. But he shall be guilty of an everlasting sin," and this "because they said; he hath an unclean spirit." In this blasphemy of the Pharisees, who affirmed that Christ was actuated by an impure spirit, and by that means worked miracles, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost were both equally concerned. It seems however that Jesus was willing to forgive that share of the crime which regarded himself, because it seemed more excusable in them to entertain these unjust sentiments in regard to a man whom they often saw conversing with sinners; but that part of the crime which is directed against the Holy Ghost, and which can only be the effect of a voluntary blindness and a consummate malice, he represents as irremissible, and beyond the reach of pardon. This, as St. Austin takes notice, is one of the most obscure passages in the scripture. St. Chrysostom expounds these words, shall not be forgiven them, to imply no more than shall scarce or seldom be forgiven, i. e. it is very hard for such sinners to return to God by a true and sincere repentance and conversion: so that this sentence is similar to that, Matt. xix. 26. where Christ seems to call it an impossible thing for a rich man to be saved. In the same place St. Chrysostom tells us, that some of those who had blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, repented and had their sins forgiven them.—St. Austin, by this blasphemy against the Spirit, understands the sin of final impenitence, by which an obstinate sinner refuseth to be converted, and therefore lives and dies hardened in his sins.

The Pharisees, through the inveteracy of their rancour against Jesus, condemned his person whilst they were forced to approve his beneficent works which were done in favour of the sick and infirm. He wishes them therefore not to make a separate cause betwixt the tree and its fruit, but to own the tree to be good, since they avow the fruit to be so; or otherwise to say that the fruit is evil, if they will maintain that the tree is bad. "Either make the tree good," says he, "and its fruit good; or make the tree evil, and its fruit evil. For by the fruit the tree is known." But why be surprised at your ill-founded censures and blasphemies; "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things, whereas

* We have followed here the order of St. Matthew, and transposed some verses of St. Luke, because the sequel is better supported in the former than in the latter: for it is more likely that the Scribes and Pharisees demanded a sign or prodigy after Christ's severe reprimand of their blasphemy, as mentioned by St Matthew, than before it as St. Luke has it. Likewise, when Jesus had said that Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, it was more probable that he immediately added the comparison of the Ninevites, and the accusation they will bring against the Jews at the day of judgment, as in St. Matthew, rather than speak of the Queen of the South, as St. Luke relates it.



Birbes of Ophir.

as you are evil? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." In effect, "a good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word * that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment:" and how much more shall you for your calumnies and blasphemies against me? "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Then some of the Scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying: Master, we would see a sign from thee," and some extraordinary miracle which may ascertain that thou art sent by God and actest by his spirit. "And as the multitudes flocked together, he said to them: This generation is a wicked generation, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's † belly three days and three nights, ‡ so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights," and then come forth full of life "For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man also be to this generation." In effect, there never was wrought a miracle either more divine or more inimitable, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ: and this was notified to the Jews in a manner neither to be suspected nor objected to; and yet, it made no greater impression on this infidel nation, than the other miracles he had already performed in their presence. Hence he says: "The men of Nineve * shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas," a person foreign to them; who without working miracles in their sight, came to announce an event equally unwelcome and improbable, viz. the entire ruin and destruction of their city; yet they listened to his admonition and did penance for their sins: "And behold a greater than Jonas is here," and they will not hearken to him. The Queen of the South † shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because she," though invested with the government of an extensive empire, "came from the ends of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here," and yet they despise his words. Jesus now denounces against the Pharisees

* An idle word is that which neither profits the speaker nor hearer: for obscene words, or meanings, though vulgarly called idle, are generally deadly sins. See St. Francis of Sales, part 3. chap. 27.

† The word in the original signifies any great fish, and some are of opinion that it was not a whale, whose gullet is too narrow, but rather a dog-fish that swallowed up Jonas.

‡ These words are not to be taken rigorously for three whole days and three whole nights, but for part of three natural days, from which in common computation, the nights used not to be separated. We have an instance of this, Esther iv. 16., where the Jews were ordered to fast with her *three days* and *three nights*, and yet, chap. v. 1., Esther, after part of three days, went to the King. The supernatural darkness that followed Christ's death, may perhaps be reckoned the first night, and the succeeding light the end of the first day.

* This city, which is generally supposed to have been built by Nimrod, was situated upon the river Tigris, and was famous for being the metropolis of the Assyrian empire.

St. Luke, after speaking of the Ninevites, subjoins three verses concerning the lamp of the body and the eye being simple, mentioned by St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. St. Augustine, (de Cons. Evang. l. 2. c. 39.) is of opinion that St. Luke may supply here what was omitted by St. Matthew, and indeed perhaps Christ may have repeated these sentences on different occasions. In this case they may be applied to the corrupt and prejudiced judgments of the Pharisees concerning Christ.

† i. e. of Sheba, or Saba, a province of Arabia Felix, lying to the south of Judea, and on the extreme part of the continent, and being bounded by the sea, is therefore said to be the utmost part of the earth.

the dreadful judgment that actually hangs over their heads in punishment of their ingratitude and unbelief; and and this he does under the figure of the possessed person whom he had recently delivered. "When," by means of baptism, or the sacrament of penance, "an unclean spirit is gone out of a man," to make room for the grace of God, "he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and he findeth none," because he maketh it to consist in the ruin of souls dear to God. "Then saith he: I will return into my house from whence I came out: and coming he findeth it empty" and void of those passions he had excited there; "swept" and cleansed from its former filth of sin; "and garnished" with the graces of the Holy Ghost. "Then" finding himself not sufficiently strong to enter into a place so well fortified, "he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is made worse than the first," both by the greater number of spirits that get possession, and by their particular care to maintain their hold. Now so shall it be to this most wicked race of people, and to obdurate and impenitent sinners, who, after receiving innumerable graces from God, and most ungratefully abusing them, shall be delivered up to the devil, to be eternally possessed by him.

CHAPTER L.

THE EXCLAMATION OF A WOMAN CONCERNING JESUS.* HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN DESIRE TO SEE HIM. MATT. XII. MARK III. LUKE XI. AND VIII.

This chapter contains, 1. The praises given to the Blessed Virgin Mary, with reference to her divine Son. 2. Her tender care for his health. 3. The communication of her maternity to the faithful.

"And it came to pass as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice," in raptures of admiration at his doctrine, and regardless of the displeasure of the Pharisees, "said to him: blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts that gave thee suck." This was a high encomium publicly bestowed upon the mother of Jesus, and which chiefly redounded upon him, who was the subject and occasion of it; for it is not probable she could have in view the mystery of the incarnation, which was at that period unknown even to the Apostles themselves.

Jesus, pleased with this instance of fortitude in a woman, who alone seemed to side with him against the

* It is clear that this exclamation of the woman is to be placed here, and that it was followed immediately after by the arrival of the mother and brethren of Jesus Christ, not only because St. Matthew and St. Mark relate this as happening before he left the house, and subjoin it to what immediatly precedes, but likewise because St. Matthew expressly adds, that they came *whilst he was yet speaking to the people*, moreover, the word *without*, employed by all the Evangelists, sufficiently indicates that Jesus was yet in the house. We must therefore conclude, that St. Luke, who relates it after the parable of the sower, does not observe the due order of time.

Pharisees, ensured to her in return a share of that happiness which she apparently envied in his mother. Since she would undoubtedly have esteemed herself most happy to have been the mother of such a son as he was, he now assured her she might become still more happy than if he were her son, because those above all others are to be deemed happy, who, like her, heard the word of God and religiously observed it. "But he said: yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." This sentence by no means derogates from that inestimable happiness which the Blessed Virgin Mary enjoys as the mother of God, and which, as she herself foretold, is acknowledged by all the nations of the earth. Still less does it imply that the Blessed Virgin did not carefully observe and fulfil the word of God. It precisely compares the happiness of her maternity to a different kind of happiness still more important, which was then proposed to mankind, and which Mary likewise possessed more fully than any other creature. "As he was yet speaking to the multitudes" on this subject, "behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And they could not come at him for the crowd: and, standing without, they sent in to call him, and the multitudes sat about him: and it was told him: behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without seeking thee," and desiring to see thee. And, answering them, he said: who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on those that sat about him, and stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said: behold my mother and my brethren: for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother: My mother and my brethren are they who hear the word of God and comply with it." * It may be presumed, though not mentioned by the Evangelists, that after this speech, Jesus followed his holy mother and his brethren, according to their desire.

By the words here spoken, Jesus meant not to disown or to express any disregard towards his mother and his brethren, as if they had given him any cause of displeasure, by appearing in their poor and humble state before so numerous a meeting; neither does he complain of being unseasonably interrupted. He is far from checking them as having brought themselves forward to the public view, in the light of persons connected with so great a man, nor does he give any sharp answer to him who had mentioned their being at the door. Those are all false notions which have been attributed to the Son of God, without the least regard to truth.

The whole mystery in what is here said, is that Jesus, who turned every common occurrence of life to a spiritual sense, employs the same figure on the present occasion. Between the new world, which is the kingdom of Christ, and this material globe, there exists a certain analogy observable in its several parts. This new world has

* St. Luke and St. Mark agree here in relating, before they speak of the mission, several things which they had omitted, and which are given above, chap. xxxi. xxxii. and xxxv. But they differ in this, that St. Mark mentions several parables, and St. Luke only one, viz. that of the sower, after which he subjoins the arrival of Mary and the brethren of Christ, which St. Mark had given in its proper place, and afterwards the tempest, &c. as in St. Mark.

its earth, which is the church; its sun, which is Jesus Christ, or truth itself; its living spring of water, which is the grace of the Holy Ghost; its fire, which is divine love; its fishery and seed, which are the sermons of its ministers; its harvest, which is the conversion of souls to God.

The same may be said with reference to kindred. In the common language of the world, the mother of Jesus is she who conceived and bore him in her womb, and in this sense he has no brothers. But in a spiritual and divine sense, the mother of Jesus is that soul which conceives him by hearing the word of God, and which brings him forth by the practice of all manner of good works. In this sense he has as many brothers and sisters as there are individuals of the faithful who partake of that same spirit, whereof he possesses the fulness, and who are to share with him the same heavenly inheritance. Thus when Jesus Christ asks who is his mother, and who are his brethren, he speaks not as the Son of Man, but as the Son of God, and as the word of his eternal Father.

CHAPTER LI.

DIFFERENT PARABLES ARE PROPOSED BY OUR LORD.* MATT. XIII. MARK IV. LUKE VIII. AND XIII.

"And when the same day," in the afternoon at Capharnaum, "a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto him, Jesus going out of the house," where he had been taking some refreshment, "sat by the sea side. And again he began to teach, and great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went up into a boat," in order to be more easily heard by them, "and there sat," whilst "all the people was about the sea side, on the land. And he taught them many things," concerning the kingdom of heaven, "in parables."

Of these parables, the first explains the different success of the word of God, according to the different dispositions of those who hear it. The second shows in what manner erroneous doctrines are mingled with the truth, and so produce heresies. The third describes the almost imperceptible steps by which souls are converted to God, and arrive at eternal salvation, The fourth and fifth show the activity of the doctrine of the gospel, and the extent of the Church throughout the world. The sixth and

* St. Matthew and St. Mark subjoin the following parables to what goes before, and the first agrees very well with what Christ has just said about hearing the word of God; but St. Luke places this parable immediately after the second journey through Galilee, which he anticipates Jesus Christ successively proposed four parables to the people, and then dismissed them; and being now retired with his disciples, he unfolded the meaning of them when in the house. Tunc dimissis turbis venit in domum. (Matt. xiii. 36.) St. Matthew however interrupts the course of these parables, and anticipates, after the first of them, the request of the disciples to have it explained, whereas according to St. Mark, this explanation did not take place till when alone in the house: cum esset singularis.

seventh lay open to us the very lucrative commerce or trade in which perfect souls are engaged, in order to attain the kingdom of heaven. The eighth represents to us the mixture of the good and bad in the bosom of the Church during this life, and their eternal separation at the day of judgment.

All these parables were spoken by Jesus on the same day, but the five first were addressed only to the people assembled on the sea shore; the other three were added by him when alone with the apostles in the house, and are in some measure explanations of the preceding ones. "Wherefore Jesus said unto them in his doctrine," as follows: "Hear ye: behold the sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the road side, and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air came and eat it up; and other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth; and when the sun was risen, it was scorched, because it had no moisture," and hence "it withered away; and other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choaked it, and it yielded no fruit: and some fell upon good ground, and brought forth fruit, that grew up and increased" to maturity, "and yielded one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred" fold. "Saying these things, he cried out: he that hath ears to ear let him hear;" that is he who has received from God a spirit of understanding and docility, let him profit of what is here said. This parable shows the various obstacles which render fruitless the word of God in those that hear it, and the happy effects it produces in others according to their various dispositions.

"Another parable he proposed to them," to explain how heresies spring up from a corruption of the true faith, "saying: the kingdom of heaven," that is, the Church of Christ, "is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep, his enemy came and over-sowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then has it cockle? And he said to them: an enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: no, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer it both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into the barn."

Jesus added a third parable, to represent to his hearers, that the word of God fails not to fructify, independently of the preacher, and that its progress is certain, although imperceptible to the outward eye. "And he said: so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, whilst he knoweth not how. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

The fourth parable represents the astonishing progress of the evangelical doctrine, which in a short space of time spread through the whole globe, in spite of all the powers of earth and hell combined against it. Another parable he proposed to them, saying: to what shall we liken the kingdom of God? or to what parable shall we compare it? The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which is the least indeed of all seeds * that are in the earth; and when it has been sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all the herbs, and becometh a tree, and shooteth out great branches; so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable,"† being the fifth, "he spoke to them," as a further representation of the same wonderful fruitfulness of the Gospel: "The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes," and the subjects of them he drew from various things most familiar to their usual habits of life. "And with many such parables he spoke to them the word" of God, "according as they were able to hear; and without parables he did not speak unto them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, * saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter all things hidden from the foundation of the world, But apart, he explained all things to his disciples," as we shall see in the sequel.†

* The Jews used to say, "as small as a grain of mustard seed," to express a very small thing; and Christ uses this expression in the same sense, as if he had said, which is one of the smallest seeds.

† Hence it is probable that Jesus spoke all these parables at the same time. There are different significations of the word *parable* in the writings of the Old and New Testament. It is sometimes used for elevated and instructive poetry, sometimes for weighty instruction in general, without poetical ornaments. It also signifies a proverbial saying, and frequently a short comparison or similitude. Lastly, it occurs for a continued relation of feigned but possible facts, bearing a general correspondence to the circumstances of those for whose instruction it was designed. Several reasons may be assigned why our Lord made use of parables: 1. They suited the turn and manner of the Eastern nations, who delighted in having their imagination struck with the boldest figures and the most glowing imagery; and we may observe, that the prophetical style in general abounds with figure and allegory. The lively imagination of the Orientals made them relish these figurative expressions, which awaken the attention and exercise the understanding, in order to trace out the resemblance between the fiction and the true state of things. 2. As the Jews were ill-disposed to receive the two great truths which Jesus Christ announced, he frequently veiled his instructions under similitudes or parables; he addressed himself to his hearers in a manner suitable to their state and condition: that is to say, not always according to the capacity of their understanding, but according to the disposition of their heart. One of the Evangelists expressly remarks, that in private he unfolded the sense of his parables to his disciples, who were more teachable and better disposed to profit of his instructions. Consequently, they who received no benefit from his discourses, for want of understanding them, could impute it solely to themselves, since he was ready to explain their meaning to such as desired it. Finally: a third motive that induced Jesus Christ to speak in parables, and which is pointed out by St. Matthew, was the accomplishment of the prophecies. For one of the characteristics of the Messiah, was that he would express himself in this parabolical manner, and Jesus Christ was pleased that the most minute circumstance should be fulfilled in his person, in order that the resemblance between him and the ancient prophets, in their manner of instructing, might lead the Jews to consider him as the great prophet foretold by Moses. Certain it is, that this lively and affecting mode of instruction by parable is calculated to make deep impressions on the mind. There are few Christians but will always dwell with singular delight and improvement on our Lord's parables; their imagination, warmed with the beauty of the images, more easily retains them; and they will ever be regarded as striking lessons of religion and moral instruction.

* Psalm lxvii.

† As to what follows these parables in St. Mark and St. Luke, see the note at the end of chap. 50.

CHAPTER LII.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER IS EXPLAINED. MATT. XIII. MARK IV. LUKE VIII.

"THEN, having sent away the multitudes, he came into the house and when he was alone, the twelve thatwere with him asked him; why speakest thou to them in parables? Who answered and said to them: because to you," who believe in me, "it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them" who are incredulous, and who harden their hearts, this favour "is not given. For he that hath" already, "to him shall be given" more, "and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables: because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand," as they might and ought; but shut their eyes against the lights that are offered them. Wherefore, "to you," my disciples, "it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God;" that is, the secret doctrines relating to the Gospel-kingdom, "but to the rest, that are without, all things are done in parables, that * seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." This passage is taken from the prophet Isaiah. chap. vi. ver. 9. where he is ordered to foretell the obstinate blindness of the Jews, in refusing to receive and believe in their Messiah. It is likewise cited in different places of the New Testament, in all which we must detest the false imputation of those sectaries who, not without heresy and blasphemy, would have God to be the author and cause of sin. When therefore it is said in Isaiah vi. 9.: blind the heart of this people, &c. the prophet is only commanded to foretell their blindness, of which, by their wilful obstinacy, they were the true cause. In like manner, when we read in St. Mark, that to those who are without, all things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, &c. the particle that, as in other places, does not signify the cause nor the end, but only the event, and the consequence of what would happen by the wilful blindness of the Jews, and the just permission of God. It is in this sense only that "the prophecy of Isaiah," describing their voluntary blindness, and the punishment thereof, "is fulfilled in them, who saith: by hearing you shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut: lest at any time

* *That* (ut, *ina opos*) and the infinitive mood are frequently used to express what will actually happen, and not formal intention and design. See Matt. ii. 13. iv. 14. Luke ix. 45. xi. 50. John xii. 38. Matt. x. 34, 35, &c.

they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." St. Matthew here expounds to us the words of the prophet (for they are somewhat different in Isaiah), and by them it clearly appears, as mentioned above, that the Jews were the cause of their own blindness, and had, by their obstinacy, rendered themselves unworthy of particular lights from God. The heart of this people, says he, is become stupid, and they have shut their eyes. The Jews, therefore, shut their own eyes, hardened their own hearts, which God only permitted.* By those who are out we may understand all heretics who are out of the body of Christ's visible Church, and all such carnal Christians as are void of charity, which is her life and soul. With regard to both these, the Scriptures and the whole of religion are veiled under the obscurity of parables. "But," in respect to the Apostles, the case was very different, and Jesus felicitates them on their singular happiness of being his disciples; "blessed are your eyes," says he, "because they see" my actions, my miracles, and my whole life, "and your ears, because they hear" my heavenly doctrine. "For, amen, I say to you: many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And his disciples" further "asked him what this parable might be. And he said to them," with apparent surprise: "are you ignorant of this parable? and how shall you know all" the other "parables," which are still more difficult? "Hear you, therefore the parable of the sower. The seed is the word of God. The sower is he that soweth the word," by preaching and instruction; and this seed falleth upon four different kinds of soils, which represent four different sorts of persons. The first are such as continue obdurate in vice: the second are such as are unsteady and inconstant in their good resolutions; the third such as are absorbed in the cares and pleasures of this life; the fourth such as have every proper disposition for receiving the word of God with fruit.

Christ now proceeds to describe the characters of these four different sorts of persons in relation to the subject in question. Of the first, he says: "These are they by the way side, where the word of the kingdom is sown, and as soon as they have heard" it, "immediately cometh the wicked one, Satan, and catcheth, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts, lest believing they should be saved." Wherefore they here are represented by the high way, whose heart by long habits of vice, is hardened like a beaten path, without being broken and ploughed, as it were, by remorse and repentance for their sins. When souls of this description hear the divine word, the evil spirit, like a bird of prey, presently makes his attack upon them, and drawing their attention to the former objects of their passions, robs them of the words of life which had been sown in their hearts, lest by ruminating upon them, and giving them time to make a due impression, they should think seriously of a change,

* See Rom. ix. 18. &c.

and break loose from the fetters of their vicious habits.

Christ next tells his disciples, who are represented by the rocky or stony ground. "And these likewise are they," says he, "that are sown on the stony ground, who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy," and, as a proof of their earnestness, form a thousand good resolutions, and even perform some good works, which are analogous to the first appearance of the growing corn. But unfortunately "they have no root in themselves, and when tribulation and persecution arise on the account of the word, they are presently scandalized. For they believe for a while, and in time of temptation, they fall away." This temptation or persecution is to them as a scorching sun, which parches up and consumes all the moisture of their sprouting virtue; their courage and resolution fail them in the time of difficulty; their devotion is at an end, and they no longer choose, at this price, to follow the maxims of their divine Master. "And others there are," says Christ, speaking of the third sort, "who are sown among thorns: these are they that hear the word" with a heart tolerably prepared; "but the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, and the lust after other things, entering in, choke the word," as so many thorns and briars; "and" thus "it is made fruitless;" for the soul divided amongst so many vain or trifling objects, becomes unable to attend seriously to christian duties, and so forfeits that fruitfulness of virtue with which she would otherwise have been blessed. Thus all the obstacles which destroy the fruit of God's word in the soul of man, may be reduced to hardness of heart, an inconstancy of mind, and a dissipation of the soul, incompatible with a virtuous life. But let us now see who are represented by the good soil, which produces fruit even to a hundred fold: for this is an emblem of what we should all endeavour to be. "These are they," says Christ, "who are sown upon good ground, who, in a good and very good heart," that is, in a heart softened by grace, ploughed up and harrowed by penance, cleansed from the noxious weeds of irregular passions and idle amusements, "hearing the word, receive it, keep it," by allowing it to sink deep in their hearts, "and bring forth fruit in patience," some in greater, some in smaller quantity, according to their respective progress in virtue; "the one an hundred fold, and another sixty, and another thirty." Jesus then pointed out to his Apostles the object which he had in view in their instruction; viz. the future instruction of others; for by teaching them, he acted as a person does who lights a candle. "Now no man lighting a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed: but setteth it upon a candlestick, that they who come in may see the light." Thus Jesus did not impart these lights to them with the view that they should bury them in silence: "For there is not any thing secret," says he, in these my instructions, "that shall not be made manifest, nor hidden that shall not be known, and come abroad" through your means. "If any man hath ears to hear let him hear. Take heed therefore how you hear" my word, that you may prac-

tise it and may be able one day to preach and announce it to the world in all its purity, without disguise or alteration. "In what measure you shall mete" to others, "it shall be measured to you again, and more shall be given to you." Fresh lights shall be imparted to you from above, in proportion as, like faithful ministers of God's word, you shall freely communicate to others what you have already received. "For whoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not" that which he might and ought to have, "that also which he hath," and which he thinketh he hath, "shall be taken away from him." This certainly ought to be a subject of great fear and apprehension to all negligent Christians, since the graces and favours which they have received from God, will, if abused, only add to their future condemnation. We may here observe with St. Austin, that they who receive favours from God, without making a proper use of them, may be said not to have them, although they be not in fact deprived of them, because they make no more use of them, than if they had them not.*

CHAPTER LIII.

EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLES CONTINUED, AND OTHER PARABLES PROPOSED. MATT. XIII.

"HIS disciples," having been thus fully instructed as to the meaning of the parable of the sower, "came to him, saying: Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field. Who made answer and said to them: He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of Man," i. e. Jesus Christ himself, who during the course of his mortal life, preached the doctrine of truth, which is the seed of eternal life: "and the field is the world: and the good seed are the children of the kingdom" of heaven, because the doctrine of truth reduced to practice, is what makes saints: "and the cockle are the children of the wicked one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil," who whilst pastors are lulled to sleep, spread the tares of error and sin amongst a great number of Christians. These falling from the state of grace, or becoming heretics, are yet mingled with the rest of the faithful in the same outward profession of Christianity, in like manner as the good corn and the cockle are mingled together in the same field. As therefore the good seed is the true doctrine of the gospel, the cockle seems to represent more properly the errors of heretics than the vices of wicked Christians. But the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels, who ask permission to extirpate the wicked even in this life: but since this extermination was not to be effected by supernatural scourges, such as those inflicted upon the first born children of the Egyptians and upon the soldiers of Sennacherib, but by natural and general means of

* See the parables of the talents, chap. 125. and St. Austin de verbis Apos. Ser. vii. chap. 4 and 5.

destruction, such as wars, plagues, famines, which affect the good indiscriminately with the wicked, therefore, Jesus withholds his consent to this severe but merited punishment, lest the virtuous should be involved in the same evil with the wicked. On the contrary, he thinks fit to allow the good corn and the weeds to grow up together, viz. the faithful and heretics, the good and the bad, to live together until the harvest time, which will be at the general resurrection; and this he does in order to exercise the patience of the faithful, and to give the wicked full leisure to repent. At that period the angels, here represented by the reapers, will make a due separation. "Even as cockle therefore is gathered up, and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandal and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and be convinced that there is nothing which he ought not willingly to do in order to avoid those eternal flames, and to obtain this heavenly kingdom. Our blessed Saviour does not seem to have explained the third, fourth, and fifth parables in a simlar manner as the two former: we shall however suggest upon each a few reflections according to the method hitherto pursued.

The third parable of the seed that springs up imperceptibly ought to be a subject of great joy to all such persons as labour for the good of souls, since it plainly shows, that their labours are not to be deemed unprofitable because the desired fruit of them does not immediately appear. A certain period of time is usually required for the operations of grace, as well as for those of nature; and hence the word of God may fitly be compared with the seed sown in the earth, both as to its secret and imperceptible growth, as likewise to the progressive stages of the effect produced.

1. The word of God, when sown in a well-disposed heart, acts in the same manner as the seed in a favorable soil: it shoots and expands itself imperceptibly, whilst the preacher, who is the spiritual sower, knows and thinks nothing of its progress. 2. In like manner as the seed in the earth produces successively the stalk, the ear, and the grain of corn, thus also does the spiritual seed of God's word, by a similar gradation, effect the salvation of a well-disposed hearer. Good desires, a disrelish for the follies and vanities of the world, sentiments of compunction, a firm faith in God, and a hope in his promises, may be called the stalk of the new growing corn, whilst good works, and the victory which the soul gains over her passions and the temptations of the devil, may be styled the ears of the corn. The perfection of divine love and final perseverance denote the corn in its most perfect state of maturity: and then God makes his harvest, i. e. he sends a happy death to his elect, and gathers them into his heavenly granary.

The fourth and fifth parables have the same meaning in relation to Christ's spiritual kingdom, and represent to us the force and activity of his

evangelical doctrine. Under the figure of the mustard seed, which is one of the smallest of grains, is represented the spiritual kingdom of Christ in his Church: for in the beginning this was small, mean, and contemptible in the eyes of the world. If we take a view of the first establishment of this kingdom, we find it to have been effected by a few poor fishermen, utterly destitute of those advantages which might recommend them to the world; we behold the very Founder himself of this kingdom an object of contempt, rejected and condemned to a disgraceful cross, while his fundamental principles are in direct opposition to all the maxims of human pride. For instance, the doctrine of original sin, of the universal corruption of human nature, and the necessity of mortifying our inclinations and passions: all these and such like truths are so contrary to the pride of man, that they naturally place the doctrine of the gospel among the lowest and most despicable of sciences, according to human sense. In all this, therefore, we find the resemblance of the mustard-seed, small, mean, and inconsiderable in the eyes of the world. In spite, however, of these obstacles, we observe that this little grain, after being buried, as it were, in the earth, quickly sprung up, and even grew into a large tree, which spread its branches far and near, affording shelter to the birds of the air, i. e. to all those souls who aspired after the happiness of heaven. For the doctrine of the gospel spread itself far and near, even to the utmost extent of the inhabited globe, and quickly produced thousands of martyrs and other saints of all states and conditions, with innumerable examples of the most heroic virtues, such as none of the schools or sects of the philosophers, or any of the ancient or modern sages of the world, with all their learning and eloquence, could ever attain. Thus has the Church of Christ infinitely surpassed in extent, duration, solidity, and splendour, every sect which either has or may arise in the world.

The parable of the leaven, we have observed, has the same tendency with that of the mustard-seed, which is to show the efficacy of the gospel. For as the leaven, though in a small quantity, affects the whole mass of flour, changes and ferments the dough by its activity, and by its sourness makes it to rise up and become lighter and more savoury and proper for digestion, so as to be wholesome bread for the food, nourishment, and support of man; so in like manner the gospel of Christ, preached by a few of his disciples, changes and ferments the whole world, penetrates the hearts of men with the love of God, and thus makes them grateful to him, and elevates them from temporal to heavenly things. The woman that takes and hides the leaven represents the Church, or, according to St. Austin,* the power and wisdom of God.

It is probable that the three ensuing parables were spoken by Christ to his apostles in the house, immediately after his having explained the parable of the cockle weed. For St. Matthew and St. Mark seem to have concluded the parables addressed to the multitude by those words, "and without parables he did not speak to them."

* L. i. Ques. Evan.

The sixth and seventh parables represent the inestimable value of the doctrine of the gospel, under the figure of a treasure hidden in a field, and of a pearl of great worth hidden at the bottom of the sea. "The kingdom of heaven," said Christ, "is like unto a treasure hidden in a field, which a man having found, hid it" again in a secure place, "and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth the field." In like manner he who, by the doctrine of the gospel, has found out the kingdom of heaven, ought to be willing to sell all his temporal goods, and to give even his very life, rather than to let slip this fortunate purchase which is to secure to him eternal joys hereafter. For "again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." Wherefore, do you buy in like manner, even at the expense of all that you possess, that eternal kingdom which faith discovers to you, but which you cannot obtain without the practice of good works. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together all kinds of fishes. Which when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth."

The eighth parable represents to us this important truth, that it suffices not to salvation to profess the true faith and the doctrine of the gospel, unless we regulate our lives by its precepts. The sea represents the world, the fishing is the preaching of the gospel, the net is the Church, the fish of all sorts caught in the net are good and bad men of all nations, who enter into the Church. When the net is full, it is drawn upon the shore, where its contents are examined: "So shall it be" with the Church "at the end of the world. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from amongst the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have ye understood all these things?" said Jesus to them. "They say to him, yes. He said unto them," intimating that these his instructions were not meant solely for themselves, but for the good of others, "therefore every Scribe instructed in the" laws of the "kingdom of heaven, is like to a man who is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old," and distributes them to his children according to their several wants: so also a pastor of souls, well versed in the heavenly science of salvation, unfolds to his flock the spiritual treasures of faith, according to their capacity; throwing light upon the mysteries of the New Testament by the figures of the Old, and displaying the novel truths of grace, by pointing out their analogy with the ordinary works of nature.

CHAPTER LIV.

JESUS PREACHES AT NAZARETH.* MATT. XIII. MARK VI. LUKE IV.

"AND it came to pass, when Jesus finished these parables, he passed from thence;" † that is, from Capharnaum and the adjoining places, "and came to Nazareth, ‡ his own country, where he was brought up; and his disciples followed him." He had delayed this journey purposely to allow the fame he had acquired by so many miracles, to reach that place before him, in order to ensure to his doctrine a more favourable reception amongst his countrymen. Had he shewn himself amongst them at an earlier stage of his ministry, they would doubtless have refused even to listen to him. "And he went into the synagogue, according to his custom, on the Sabbath-day, and he rose up ‖ to read," as was usual with those who had any thing to impart to the audience. "And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto him: and as he unfolded the book, he found the place where it was written" concerning his own divine mission and employment.* "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore he hath anointed me" by the unction of the Holy Ghost "as by a holy balsam: he hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor," rather than to the rich, who are generally less disposed to receive it, being too much attached to earthly objects, and "to heal the contrite of heart" of their deep and deadly wounds occasioned by sin: "to preach deliverance to the captives," groaning under the slavery of the devil, "and sight to the blind," hitherto plunged in the darkness of ignorance and error; "to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," as a general jubilee, wherein God is pleased, out of his pure mercy, to remit to mankind their debts, and to release them from the slavery of sin, by reinstating them in their former liberty of the children of God: "and the day of retribution," † when God shall render to every one according to his works,

* It has been remarked above, chap. 24, that St. Luke anticipated what is here said by St. Matthew and St. Mark, concerning Nazareth, on that account omitting it in this part of his gospel, he proceeds to the mission of the Apostles.

† Meaning Capharnaum and the adjacent places, where he had spoken the above-mentioned parables. From this time he seems not to have dwelt any more at Capharnaum, though he occasionally passed through it, as he did through other towns, without making any considerable stay.

‡ From these words of St. Luke, according to his custom, and what follows, ver. 23. concerning *the great things done in Capharnaum*, it is clear that this event did not happen in the time and order mentioned by St. Luke; for Jesus was only then beginning to teach in public, nor had he performed any thing at Capharnaum. It seems that St. Luke transposes this account, in order to assign some cause why Jesus in preference to Nazareth, took up his habitation at Capharnaum, of which he was about to speak.

‖ Though every synagogue had a settled reader, to whom was allowed an annual stipend, yet when any grave or learned person came in, especially if a stranger, it was customary to make him the compliment of reading the portion of Scripture appointed for the day. Acts xiii. 15. This was read in Hebrew, and then expounded in Chaldaic.

* Isa. vi. 1.

† Isaias in this place speaks of himself as a figure of the Messias. The captivity of Babylon, which was the literal object of this prophecy, was a figure of the state of mankind; the return from this captivity announced by Isaiah, and procured by Cyrus, represented the redemption of man, accomplished by Jesus Christ.

and be revenged of all his enemies. "And when he had folded the book, he restored it to the minister and sat down; and the eyes of all the synagogue were fixed upon him," eagerly expecting he would explain these words. "And he began to teach" and "to say to them: this day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears," alluding not merely to the action he was engaged in, but to every thing he had done since the commencement of his ministry. "And many hearing him were" at first "in admiration at his doctrine, and all gave testimony to him, and wondered at the word of grace that proceeded from his mouth." But these flattering testimonies, which the force of truth drew from their mouths, were quickly succeeded by a spirit of envy which yet lurked within their breasts. Hence murmuring to each other, "they said: how came this man by this wisdom and miracles? how came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works as are wrought by his hands?" They then began to sum up every particular circumstance of his life which might any ways tend to lessen him in the esteem of the public. "Is not this," said they, "the carpenter? Is not this the carpenter's * son? Is not this the son of Joseph? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude;* and his sisters," that is, his cousins, "are they not all with us? Whence therefore hath he all these things? And they were scandalized in his regard," the meanness of his temporal birth preventing them from acknowledging his divine greatness.

We cannot but be surprised at the blindness and stupidity of these Nazareans, who carried their evil disposition against Jesus so far as to doubt even the truth of his miracles; and hence they wished him, for the clearing up of their doubts, to perform in their presence some of those wonderful works which public report stated him to have performed at Capharnaum. "But Jesus said to them," anticipating the request they were about to make: "Doubtless you will say to me this similitude: Physician heal thyself: as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country." But he declined giving

* The Greek word (*Tekton*), as well as the Latin (artifex), signifies in general a workman, either in wood, metal, or stone. But the common belief of the faithful is what our translation has specified, viz. that Joseph was a carpenter, which may be confirmed by what Theodoret relates, Lib. 3, Hist. chap. xviii. of Libanius, under Julian the apostate. The latter asking scornfully what the carpenter's son was doing at that time, the holy man made him this smart reply, that he was making a coffin for Julian, who accordingly, was killed not long after.

* These four, James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, called here the brethren of Christ, were children of Alpheus, who is likewise called Cleophas, and of Mary, whom St. John (chap. xix. ver. 25.) calls the sister, in other words the cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Some interpreters think that Alpheus was the brother of Joseph, in which supposition these four disciples would have been apparently related to Jesus Christ, by the father's side, although really so on that of the mother. But of this nothing can be positively asserted. In Scripture the name of brother and sister are taken in a very wide and extended sense. James, the brother of Jesus, is James the less, one of the twelve Apostles; and Jude, the brother of James, is St. Jude, author of the canonical Epistle, and likewise one of the twelve. Our Blessed Lady was the only child of Joachim and Ann; consequently Mary, the mother of James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, was not her sister, as some pretend. St. John Damascen speaks of St. Ann as having been a long time barren without children, and that, like Ann the mother of Samuel, she obtained by her fervent prayers, and those of Joachim her husband, the ever immaculate Virgin, who bore the Son of God made man. There is not the least probability that Mary, the wife of Alpheus, was the sister of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by Joachim and Ann; for it was never customary to call two sisters by the same name. See Perelius (Proleg. in Evang. Joan.), where he says, that according to ancient and approved histories, St. Ann brought forth the Blessed Virgin when she was sixty years of age.

them this satisfaction: "and he said: Amen, I say to you, that no prophet is accepted of in his own country. * A prophet is not without honour but in his country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred." The fact is, they do not easily divest themselves of the impressions which they have imbibed of his person from his childhood; and moreover, they are often actuated by a secret envy against those who assume any superiority over them, considering their elevation as a reproach to their own obscurity. Wherefore, as miracles are to be wrought with a view to the conversion of souls, a prophet will be less inclined to work them in his native place, where they are less attended to, than in distant parts, where there is a better prospect of success.

A second reason assigned by Christ for this his refusal, is drawn from the usual conduct of Providence. A prophet sent by God for the benefit of mankind, follows not, in the exercise of this high employment, the bent of his own inclinations or views: he seeks not to draw from the talent intrusted to him, a subject of applause, or any return of gratitude to himself: he goes whithersoever God sends him, even into the most distant regions, and his scene of action is precisely where Providence marks it out to him. In proof of these Jesus quotes two instances in the Old Testament, the one of Elias, the other of Eliseus. "In truth, I say to you, there were many" indigent "widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth; * and to none of them was Elias sent but to Sarepta," a small village in the country "of Sidon, to a widow woman," that he might bestow on this stranger, in preference to his own countrymen, the necessary succours of which she stood in need. "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian," and a Gentile.

From these two examples he left them to infer, that if in the distribution of miracles the Almighty had here given the preference to such persons as were strangers and Gentiles, rather than to his own people, they should not wonder that he had fixed his residence at Capharnaum, a city indeed with which he had no previous connection, but to which God had directed him rather than to Nazareth, although the latter were more properly his own country; and they should wonder less upon this account, because on this occasion he had only preferred to their town another city of Judea, in every point of view more considerable than Nazareth. "And all they in the synagogue hearing these things," and knowing he meant by these examples to reproach them with their incredulity, "were filled wih anger. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city; and they brought him to the top of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he," compassionating their blindness, prevented so horrid a deed, and "passing

* This was a common proverb among other nations as well as the Jews, and therefore Aristides used to say; that a philosopher was never worse than at home. Grotius on Matthew.

* 3 Kings xvii.

through the midst of them, went his way," either by making himself invisible, or by striking them with a stupor, which affected their senses to such a degree, that they no longer knew what they did. "And he could not" be induced to "do any miracles there, only that he cured a few that were sick, laying his hands upon them, and he wondered because of their unbelief."

CHAPTER LV.

THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. MATT. XIV. MARK VI.

ST. JOHN had been now imprisoned at Macheron * about a year, at the solicitation of Herodias, and would probably before this have fallen a sacrifice to her vindictive cruelty, had it not been for the personal respect which Herod entertained for him, and the great holiness of his life. These in some measure counterbalanced, in the mind of that prince, the efforts of this wicked woman, who insatiably thirsted after his blood. At length, however, an opportunity offered itself which completely answered her wishes. This was the festivity of Herod's birth-day, which gave occasion to the death of St. John, as related by the Evangelists, in the following manner. "And when a convenient day was come," for the design of Herodias, to wit, "Herod's birth-day, Herod made a supper for the princes and tribunes, and chief men of Galilee." Herein he conformed to a custom established by the Pagans, who not extending their hopes beyond this life (where they placed all their happiness,) usually celebrated the anniversary of their entrance into the world with the greatest profusion and conviviality. "And when" Salome "the daughter of the same Herodias," and Philip, "had come in" to the banqueting room, "and had danced, and pleased Herod and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel: ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it to thee * And he swore to her: whatsoever thou shalt ask, I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom.† Who," judging herself unequal, through her age, to give a proper answer to so unlimited an offer, ran in haste, and "when she was gone out, said to her mother, what shall I ask? But she," glad of so favourable an opportunity of compassing the death of him whom she had so long viewed as her greatest enemy, "said" to her daughter, without the least hesitation; ask for "the head of John the Baptist. Who when she was returned immediately with haste to the king," in order not to lose the present moment of her favour with him, "she asked, saying: I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad" at so extra-

* The castle of Macherus, where, according to Josephus, St. John was confined, was two leagues beyond the lake Asphaltites, upon the borders of Arabia Petrea.

* From this instance St. Ambrose and other saints take occasion to show the dangerous consequences of a passion for dancing, and the depravity from which it often takes its rise.

† An offer like this we find was made by Assuerus to queen Esther, chap. v. 3.

ordinary a request, and, it seems, even hesitated for a short time what to do; "yet, because of his" inconsiderate "oath, * and because of them that were with him at table," who espoused her cause, "he would not displease her. But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish. And he beheaded him in the prison," † without allowing him so much as the formality of a trial: "and brought his head in a dish, and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother," who, as St. Jerome relates, made it her pastime to pierce the sacred tongue with a bodkin, as Fulvia did Cicero's. Thus the birth-day festival of Herod Antipas was stained with the blood of him, than whom, according to truth itself, a greater had not risen among those born of women: and his head was made the reward of a young girl's agility in dancing: but to John himself this scene was the festival of his birth to a happy eternity, and the loss of his life was rewarded by an eternal crown of glory. This happened about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, about the time of the paschal solemnity, a year before the death of our blessed Redeemer, "which his disciples, hearing, came, and took his body, and laid it in a tomb, and came and told Jesus" the melancholy event. Great misfortunes afterwards befell Herod and his family, in punishment for this horrid murder. His army was soon after cut to pieces by Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea, his lawful wife's father, who, in revenge for Herod's dismissing his daughter to make place for Herodias, invaded his territories, and made himself master of the castle of Macherus. He was likewise deprived of his tetrarchate by Caligula; his goods were confiscated; and he himself banished, with Herodias, to Lyons in Gaul, where they both died in great misery, as Josephus assures us, Book 18. chap, 67.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE SECOND JOURNEY OF JESUS INTO GALILEE.* HIS COMMISSION AND CHARGE TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES.‡ MATT. IX. AND X. MARK VI. LUKE VIII. AND IX.

The Evangelists here relate two distinct missions for the propagation of the gospel: the first was performed by Jesus in person; the second by his twelve Apostles. "And it came to pass," after the decollation of John

* It is in vain that Herod alleged his oath on this occasion: this was certainly unjust, and therefore it could not bind him. It is a principle admitted by all theologians, that no oath can be a bond of iniquity, to oblige any one to do what God forbids.

† It is uncertain at what time St. John was beheaded: but this event must certainly have taken place between the deputation sent by him to Jesus, chap. 47. and the conjecture of Herod concerning our Lord, chap. 57.

‡ It is probable that St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke speak of the same journey of Jesus into Galilee from their using the same phraseology. We follow St. Mark in placing it here, before the mission of the Apostles which immediately follows it; for St. Matthew has anticipated both the one and the other, and St. Luke having begun to relate the journey into Galilee, inserts, before the mission of the Apostles, several histories and parables which happened long before, beginning with the parable of the sower. See the note at the end of chap. 50.

* See the first, chap, 29.



Death of John the Baptist.

the Baptist, that "Jesus went about all the cities and towns" of Galilee, "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity," thus to establish the truth of his doctrines. It is probable, that he embraced the opportunity of St. John's martyrdom, to add to the number of his own disciples all such as had been attached to the precursor, as these were now, by their master's death, left without a teacher. "And the twelve were with him," in order that he might thus inure them by his example to the arduous duties of the apostleship, and teach them in what manner they were successfully to labour for the conversion of souls. "And certain women" likewise accompanied him, "who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities;" among whom were "Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth. And Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others,* who ministered unto him of their substance," and defrayed the expenses unavoidable in his several journies. This their attendance on him was, at that time, by no means a subject of scandal to any in Judea, because, as St. Jerome observes on St. Matthew, chap. 27, it was an usual thing to see women contributing by their riches to the maintenance of those who were their guides in things appertaining to piety and religion. Jesus was also followed by great crowds of people; "and seeing the multitudes" were eager to follow and listen to him, "he had compassion on them, because they were distressed and lying" along the road sides, "like sheep that have no shepherd. Then he saith to his disciples; the harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth labourers into his harvest. Then calling together the twelve Apostles," he gave them the necessary documents * for their entering upon this harvest: 1. By investing them with fresh powers for that purpose. 2. By giving them proper directions for their making a due use thereof.

1. He invested them with a double power, viz. "he gave them power and authority over all devils; and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities." These miraculous powers were in some measure necessary for the success of their mission, in order to supply the deficiency of eloquence, riches, talents, and all other human means which were wanting to to them. "And he began to send them two and two," arranged in proper order. "And the names of the twelve Apostles are these: the first Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee,† and John his brother, Philip and

* The Blessed Virgin is not mentioned among these holy women, though she was probably the individual companion of our Saviour in all his journies.

* It was not on this occasion that he constituted them his Apostles; they had before received their authority and the power of working miracles, as appears from St. Mark. St. Matthew, though he anticipates this mission, insinuates the same thing. For without making mention of their election, he says, *the names of the twelve Apostles are these.* It is however probable that they received on this occasion a still more ample power of healing, and casting out devils. It is here to be observed, that the Apostles did not make use of their power before they were sent by Christ.

† James the Son of Zebedee, called James the Greater, put to death by Herod, Acts xii. 2. He was brother to John the Evangelist. The other James was called the *Lesser*, also James of Alpheus, and the brother of our Lord, Bishop of Jerusalem, martyred there about the year 61.—Greek, Lebbæus, the same with Thaddæus amongst the Hebrews See chap. 143.

Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the publican, and James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanean, and Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent" into the different parts of the country "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." But in sending his apostles as his ambassadors, Jesus delivered to them various instructions, such as were proper for their conduct not only in this instance, but in all their future missions; and which might serve likewise, in some degree, for all succeeding apostolic missionaries throughout the world. These instructions * consist principally in precautions. 1. Against such obstacles as might impede the success of their preaching. 2. Against all anxiety respecting their future wants. 3. Against the persecutions which their preaching would draw down upon them.

The first obstacle to be guarded against, was not to prejudice the Jews against the gospel, by preaching it to the Gentiles and Samaritans. Wherefore Jesus sent the twelve, giving them these commands: "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."† The second obstacle of which they were to beware, was avarice. Hence Christ enforces the contrary spirit of disinterestedness to so great an extent, as absolutely to debar his Apostles from every species of profit and indulgence which has the appearance of personal ease and convenience. "And he commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, but a staff only," to walk with, "no scrip" for their provisions, "no bread, nor money in their purse. But to be shod with sandals" only, such as they then wore, "and that they should not put on two coats. And he said to them: Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses: no scrip for your journies, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff" * to defend yourselves. In lieu of these conveniences place your trust in Providence. Receive no kind of acknowledgment for your labours. "And going preach, saying: the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." By these miracles, give proof that your mission is founded upon truth, and that your doctrine is from God. But above all, as "you have received gratis, give gratis," because this divine power being the pure gift of God's grace, it is not to be acquired by any earthly bribe or

* St. Thomas restrains the precepts here given to the Apostles to the time of their present mission among the Jews.

† The Apostles were first sent to the Jews, because they were the *children of the kingdom*, Matt. viii. 12, to whom the promise of the Messiah was made, Gen. xvii. 1. and of *whom as concerning the flesh he came*, Rom. ix. 5, and therefore it was the divine will, that they should be first honoured with the preaching of the gospel, and alone enjoy the ministry of Jesus Christ and his disciples whilst he continued on earth. But upon their rejecting so great a salvation, the commission of the Apostles was enlarged. For it was necessary, says St. Peter to the Jews, *that the word of God should first have been spoken to you*, but *seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles*, Acts xiii. 46.

* *Nor a staff*, yet St. Mark says, *but a staff only*. A staff may serve for two purposes, either for defence or for a support. The first is forbidden in St. Matthew, the second is allowed in St. Mark.—*Nor two coats, nor shoes*, i. e. provide not yourselves with a coat for a change as the rich do, but do like poor people, who have only what is necessary: regard not whether you have a staff or not. The design of Jesus Christ in these admonitions was to teach his ministers to trust in divine providence, and to beware of covetousness. Wherefore the end and spirit of these precepts was perpetual, though the precepts themselves, as to the letter, were only temporary.

human consideration, and it is no less than the highest indignity to act herein as in a temporal concern, or wordly transaction.

2. Jesus in the next place cautions his Apostles against all anxiety about their own wants and necessities. This advice was the more necessary, since after an injunction of so perfect a disinterestedness, they might naturally ask how they were to subsist during their evangelical labours. This demand he anticipates by saying that they were entitled to a maintenance from those who should reap the benefit of their labours. "For the workman," said he, "is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy" to lodge you, lest otherwise the sacredness of your character be any ways lessened in the eyes of the world, by the unworthiness of the persons with whom you take up your abode. "And whatsoever house you shall enter into, abide there, and depart not from thence" without good reason, lest you incur the imputation of fickleness or of a blameable nicety. "And when you come into the house, salute it,* saying: peace be to this house. And if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it; but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you," and you will have this comfort, that you have discharged your duty. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet,* for a testimony against them." 1. That the word of truth has actually been announced to them, and that they cannot plead ignorance of it. 2. That they have rejected the word of truth with insolence, by refusing to receive those who announced it. And 3. That they have now unavoidably to expect the dreadful anathema of God's judgment, who will not fail to avenge the contempt shown to his holy word. Jesus adds, with a solemn asseveration: "Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." This declaration is grounded: 1. Upon the insult they offered to God by refusing to receive those whom he sends: 2. Upon the remorse and anguish they shall experience for having thus rejected the proffered means of salvation: 3. Upon the contempt with which they treated miracles, which are the voice of God and proofs of his doctrine; for these are the aggravations of guilt which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah stand not charged with.

3. Jesus forewarned his Apostles of the persecutions which they had to expect, and against which they were to arm themselves by meekness, prudence, simplicity, fortitude, and resignation. "Behold," says he, "I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves." These two virtues are to be blended in such a manner, that neither of them be

* The Greek has only *salute them*: the rest seems to have been added from St. Luke, where he relates the mission of the seventy-two disciples, chap. 79, in order to connect it more easily with what follows concerning peace. The Greek word *aspasasthe*, salute, is put here to imply all happiness and prosperity.

* As this sentence is found in other places, we must conclude that Jesus made use of it repeatedly on different occasions, or that Matthew here as in other places, collects together several things belonging to the same subject.

carried to excess. Prudence without simplicity degenerates into artfulness and cunning, whilst simplicity destitute of prudence may easily become stupidity and folly. But when united, they impart mutual advantages to each other; prudence becomes commendable, and simplicity enlightened.

Jesus then proceeds to point out various occasions in which the practice of these virtues will be called for. 1. Prudence will be highly necessary to them in the various dangers to which they will be exposed from their necessary intercourse with mankind; wherefore he advises them to be ever upon their guard in the exercise of their functions. "But beware of men," says he, who are themselves those wolves into the midst of which I send you: "For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and you shall be brought before governors and before kings for my sake," in order to be "for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" of the care I have taken to announce to them the doctrine of salvation; and of the obstinacy with which they have rejected it. "But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For" on these occasions, when my honor is at stake, and you are supporting my interests, "it is not" properly "you that speak, but" rather "the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you," enlightening your minds and suggesting such words as are suitable to the occasion. But these are not the only trials you will have to undergo; for "the brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death." Thus you will see your nearest relations become your greatest enemies. "And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake; but amidst all these persecutions lose not courage, remembering the inestimable value of that eternal salvation which is to be gained by patient suffering, and that "he" only "that shall persevere to the end, shall be saved. And when they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another." This conduct, which is directed by a principle of self-preservation, has indeed many advantages: it tends to save the lives of the ministers of God's word; it obviates the commission of crimes in the persecutors themselves, and it is the means by which the christian faith may be spread through distant provinces, which thus find life and salvation in consequence of the blind fury of others. Nor were they to fear lest places of refuge should be wanting to them. "Amen I say to you, you shall not finish * preaching through all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come" to execute vengeance on your persecutors.

2. With regard to the virtue of simplicity, Jesus shows how extremely useful this will be to his Apostles, in order to their readily submitting to the will of providence, which permits these persecutions to befall them. Amongst the various reasons alleged for this purpose, the first is drawn

* According to St. Austin, (l. 1. contra Gaudentium, c. 18.) and Rupert, Christ does not here direct his discourse solely to his Apostles, but to all succeding apostolic missioners; so that by the *cities of Israel* we are to understand not only the cities of Palestine, but the cities of the spiritual Israel.

from his own example. "The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above the Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub," the prince of devils, "how much more them of his household? Therefore fear them not:" all the evils they can make you suffer, will only serve to render you more conformable to your divine Master, and more glorious before men; "for nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known," and therefore the justice of your cause, the innocence of your life, and the truth of your words, shall one day be made manifest in the sight of heaven and earth, and your adversaries be covered with confusion. "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light, and that which you hear in your ear, preach ye upon the house top," * in order to convince mankind that it is the pure truth alone which you announce, and that therefore it is in vain to calumniate the christian religion as a mystery of darkness and abomination. "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." Wherefore, under the absolute necessity of espousing the cause of God or that of the world, at open war with each other, we cannot hesitate what choice to make, seeing there is this essential or rather infinite difference between them, that the world can only kill the body, which is otherwise mortal and soon to die, whilst on the other hand God can punish both body and soul in eternal flames. Moreover, if you suffer any thing for the sake of God, think not that your sufferings are unknown to him, or that they will go unrewarded. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. But," as to you, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, better are you than many sparrows," and your heavenly Father will be far more attentive to all that concerns you. I will engage him myself to recompense you abundantly for all that you may do for me. "Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." As to the rest, "think not that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace," such as carnal men desire, "but the sword," and therefore this warfare in which my disciples will be engaged, is no way contrary to the design I had in coming into the world. "I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He" therefore, "that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me," either to bear my name, to be a member of my mystical body, or to partake of my rewards; "and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Who but a God could utter this sublime language, such as had

* The houses were low, and the tops of them were flat, with windows open to the inner court, and obstructed by lattice on the outside. The house top was the place for seeing or proclaiming any thing.

never been used before by any prophet or apostle? I say more, "he that taketh not up his cross and followeth me," in my sufferings and death, "is not worthy of me." This condition may appear hard to such as love this present life; but let them know, that "he that findeth his life" in this world at the expense of his faith, "shall lose it" for ever in the next: "and he that shall lose his life" in this world, "shall find it" again hereafter in a much greater degree of happiness and perfection for all eternity. But not only the Apostles are to be rewarded, but likewise all those who by their influence and concurrence shall contribute to the establishment of the gospel. Christ insinuates to his disciples, that there shall always be found charitable persons who will afford them harbour and protection, and as an encouragement to such he declares that what is done to them is done to himself. "He that receiveth you," says he, "receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet; and he that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man, shall receive the reward of a just man. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name" and quality "of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." It is in vain therefore, says St. Jerome, for any one to dispense himself from giving alms, by alleging his poverty, since Christ here promises that the smallest benefaction or assistance bestowed on the indigent with a proper intention, shall not go unrewarded. "And it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of giving these precepts to his twelve disciples," they departed agreeably to his orders, to announce the gospel, whilst "he himself passed from thence to teach and preach in their cities. And going out they went about through the" lesser "towns preaching the gospel, and healing every where. And they preached that men should do penance. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil * many that were sick and healed them," by this particular circumstance showing that they were inferior to their divine Master, who cured the infirm with a single word, or simply by his touch.

* It was usual with the Jews to prescribe oil as a proper thing to anoint the sick; but its virtue, in the present instance, when used by the Apostles, was not *natural*, but *supernatural*, and derived from him who sent them, because this unction always produced a certain and constant cure in those who were annointed. It is the opinion of Bede, Theophilactus, Lyranus, and others, that Christ, on this occasion, instituted the sacrament of extreme unction: but the contrary opinion is generally received among divines, as more conformable to the Council of Trent, sess. 14. However, the miraculous gift of healing the sick with oil which Christ conferred on the Apostles, was a prelude or gradual preparation to the dignity to which he raised this unction, when he established it a perpetual rite in his holy Church. Of this St. James says: (chap. v. 14, 15.) "Is any man sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Here we see extreme unction explained at large, and the practice of it enforced in the clearest terms, as of a sacrament of the new law. Here is a visible sign, viz, the anointing of the sick man and the prayer of faith. 2. The promise of grace conferred by it, viz. the raising up of the sick man, and the remission of sins. 3. It is not mentioned as a passing rite, but instituted as a permanent, perpetual ordinance; and therefore it has always been received and practised in the Catholic Church as an universal divine law and holy sacrament, provided for us by our merciful Redeemer, as a means of fortifying our souls in sickness against the attacks and snares of our spiritual enemies, and of preparing us for our great and last passage out of this life to eternity.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE INCREASING REPUTATION OF JESUS. HIS RETREAT INTO THE DESERT—AND HIS MULTIPLICATION OF FIVE LOAVES. MATT. XIV. MARK VI. LUKE IX. JOHN VI.

"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the fame of Jesus," and "of all things that were done by him; for his name was made manifest." That this prince had not sooner heard of Jesus, is to be attributed either to the usual indifference with which princes frequently listen to any thing concerning religion and piety, or else to the unavoidable occupations which engrossed his whole attention during the war he was then engaged in against Aretas his father-in-law. "And" Herod "was in a doubt" concerning this new prophet, who was now so much the subject of discourse in Galilee; and the more so, because his courtiers were divided into different opinions. For "it was said by some," probably of the Pharisees: "John the Baptist is risen again from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him. But by other some, that Elias hath appeared, and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again: but others" believed Jesus to be a new prophet, and "said: he is a prophet like one of the" ancient "prophets. Which Herod hearing, said: John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" And as tyrants easily believe that to be real which they are in dread of, he rather leaned to the opinion of those who judged the person in question to be John the Baptist risen again from the dead; especially as his conscience charged him with having put him to death unjustly. On this account he was not without apprehension, lest God might now have invested him with sufficient powers to take full revenge for his cruelty against him; "and he therefore sought to see him," in order to ascertain by his features whether he were really the person. "And," in this state of uncertainty, "he said to his servants, this is John the Baptist whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him. Which" apprehension of Herod, "when Jesus had heard, he retired from thence;" not with the view of flying from him, since he returned even the following day to Capharnaum, but purposely that the news of his retreat might lessen the tyrant's fears, and at the same time afford to his disciples, now returned from their mission, a short respite from their labours, as insinuated by St. Mark and St. Luke. "And the apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to him all things that they had done and taught. And he said to them: come apart into a desert place, and rest a little: for there were many coming and going, and they had not so much as time to eat. And taking them, and going up into a ship, they went into a desert place apart, which belongeth to Beth-

saida:* over the sea of Galilee,† which is that of Tiberias; and they saw them going away, and many knew it: and they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities, and were there before them. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased. He therefore went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near at hand," being the third since the commencement of our Saviour's public minstry. "And Jesus going out saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he received them" with kindness, "and began to teach them many things of the kingdom of God, and healed their sick, and them who were in need of healing: And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him, saying: this is a desert place, and the hour is now past, send them away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat. But Jesus said to them; they have no need to go; give you them to eat. And they said to him," ironically,* "let us go and buy bread for 200 pence," or about forty shillings,† "and we will give them to eat:" this was probably said by Judas Iscariot. However, "when Jesus had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip," a good, kind, and compassionate man, "whence shall we buy bread that they may eat,‡ and this he said to try him," whether in this emergency he would recur to his omnipotent providence; "for he himself knew what he would do. Philip," however, had no such thought, but instantly "answered him: two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. But he saith to them: how many loaves have you? Go and see; and when they knew, one of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: there is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these amongst so many? unless perhaps we should go and buy food for all this multitude. Now there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, bring them hither to me; and he commanded them that they should make them all sit down by companies upon the green grass." For "there was much grass in the place;

* It was called *the desert* of Bethsaida, not because it was on the same side as the town, but opposite to it, the sea intervening. Wherefore those who saw Jesus setting out immediately concluded that he was going to that desert where they could not follow him on foot, but by going round on the northern extremity of the lake. There, having passed the Jordan, either in boats or by a bridge, they made such haste as to arrive at this place before Jesus, as St. Mark relates, chap. vi. ver. 33. whilst others, who were not so expeditious, followed after, according to St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John; so that there is no contradiction in the Evangelists.

† St. John does not usually relate what is mentioned by the other Evangelists, especially what happened in Galilee. If he does it on this occasion, it is in order to introduce the subject of the heavenly bread, which begins in this chapter, ver. 37. Moreover it seems that he had particularly in view to describe the different Passovers during the time of Christ's preaching. As he therefore staid in Galilee during the third Passover, he relates pretty fully his transactions during that time.

* Some think this was not said ironically, but that their common purse might have contained this sum, arising from the liberality of friends; and that the Apostles on this occasion were ready generously to employ it all, not indeed to satisfy so great a multitude, because it was not sufficient, but merely to help them a little in their pressing necessity.

† According to some authors, each piece called a denarius, was about seven pence-halfpenny of our money.

‡ Our Lord first said, not adverting as it were to the difficulty, and to so large a multitude, *give them to eat.* but afterwards considering and urging, as it were, the difficulty, and accommodating himself to the weakness and admiration of his disciples, he says, *whence shall we buy bread?* So there is no contradiction.

and they did so; and he made them all sit down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties," that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people more regularly served. "The men therefore sat down in nnmber about five thousand. And" Jesus "taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and when he had given thanks,* blessed them, and broke the loaves and distributed to his disciples to set before the multitude. And the disciples" gave "to the multitudes that were sat down.† In like manner also of the fishes, he divided among them all, as much as they would; and they did all eat and were filled."

This miraculous multiplication of the loaves was effected partly in the hands of Jesus, when he broke them, and partly in the hands of his disciples when they distributed them to the people; so that this wonderful event happened without any outward show, and perhaps without being observed by the generality of those who were benefited by it. It is in the breast of him alone who was the cause of this multiplication, to say how it was effected; but it appears from the context, that Christ did not on this occasion form new loaves, or new fishes, in the hands of the Apostles as they were distributing them, because it is here affirmed that the two fishes he divided amongst them all, as he did the five barley loaves, which would be false if he had either formed new fishes or loaves, or the angels supplied others invisibly.

To render this miracle still more conspicuous, Jesus was pleased to make it appear to the eyes of all, that he had not only supplied their present wants, but that a considerable overplus was remaining. "And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost," hereby insinuating that charity is perfectly consistent with frugality. "They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten, and of the fishes;" which was in fact a much larger quantity than was at first set before our Lord to divide. "And the number of those that did eat was five thousand men, besides women and children," who might possibly amount to an equal number. Now those men when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: this is the prophet indeed" like unto Moses, "that is to come into the world" as foretold by him: for as the people of God were miraculously fed by Moses in the desert, so likewise had Jesus, in this instance, fed them in a manner no less wonderful and miraculous.

* In imitation of Jesus giving thanks on this occasion, let Christians learn to do the same at their meals, begging of God that his gifts may be sanctified for their use.

† In the Greek there is a small addition, viz. to *the disciples* and *the disciples to them that were set down.* The Syriac and some Greek copies agree with the vulgate.

PART IV.

CHAPTER LVIII.

JESUS RETIRES AGAIN TO THE MOUNTAIN. HE WALKS UPON THE SEA, AND HEALS ALL THAT ARE SICK. MATT. XIV. MARK VI. JOHN VI.

ON this occasion Jesus gives us a lesson to fly honours and dignities; for he fled into the mountain himself alone, and rendered himself invisible, to frustrate the people's design of making him king. As God indeed, he always was and will be King and Sovereign of the whole creation; as man he is also King, but not of this world; we pray for his kingdom to come, when all his enemies will be put under his footstool. 2. He here displays his empire over the sea, by treading under his feet the pride of that raging element. 3. He shows his absolute power over the human body, by healing various diseases.

"Jesus therefore, when he perceived that they would come to take him by force, and make him king," prevented the execution of their design, and thereby spared both the Romans and Herod Antipas those jealous fears of a rival in empire, which they would otherwise have experienced. Had he permitted this attempt, the news of it would have quickly spread far and near; and in a matter of such delicacy, it would have been difficult for him to clear himself from the suspicion of abetting their designs. It was certainly easier to prevent them; and, by so doing, he effectually refuted beforehand the false accusations which were afterwards brought against him before Pilate, of raising a sedition among the people in his favour. Wherefore "he immediately obliged his disciples to go into the ship, that they might go before him over the water to the city of Bethsaida,* whilst he dismissed the people; and when evening was come,† his disciples went down to the sea, and when they had gone up into a ship, they went over the sea to Capharnaum. And'

* The Apostles were in a *desert place belonging to Bethsaida*, which probably was divided from it by some bay or creek that ran out into the land: and Christ now only ordered them to pass over this creek, to the city of Bethsaida; where he might afterwards have joined them, when he had sent away the people. But in their passage thither, a *great storm* arose, and they were driven, by a contrary wind, into the midst of the sea, towards Capharnaum. Or probably, when they found the wind so violent, they were afraid of being shipwrecked, if they came near the shore, and therefore rowed out to sea. This reconciles the seeming disagreement between St. Mark and St. John, when, notwithstanding the direction Christ had given his disciples *to go before him* to Bethsaida, we find them *going to Capharnaum*. N. B. Bethsaida was, according to some authors, situated on the east side of the lake, and Capharnaum on the west, as appears from Josephus. (Ant. lib. 18. c. 3.) But as St. John (chap. xii. 21.) speaks of Bethsaida in Galilee, there can be no manner of inconvenience in supposing two cities of the same name, because the word Bethsaida, signifying a *house of fishing*, there might be one on each side of the lake.

† The same expression occurs in the preceding chapter, (Matt. xiv. 15.) and before the multiplication of the loaves: and as this happened some hours before the retreat of Jesus Christ, here mentioned by St. John, it is manifest that the Jews reckoned two evenings. The first began when the sun was declining, that is, about three in the afternoon, and the second after sunset.

Jesus, "having dismissed the multitude, fled again into the mountain himself alone, to pray; and it was now dark, and Jesus was not come unto" his disciples: "but the boat, in the midst of the sea, was tossed with waves, and himself alone" remained "on the land. And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew." This extraordinary agitation of the waters was purposely caused by Jesus, with the view of trying their faith and confidence in him during his absence. At length, "seeing them labouring in rowing, for the wind was" much "against them, about the fourth watch of the night," or three o'clock in the morning, "he cometh to them, walking upon the sea. When they had rowed therefore twenty-five or thirty furlongs," not much above three miles, "they see Jesus walking upon the sea, and drawing nigh to the ship; and he would have passed by them. But they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was an apparition," and, according to the mistaken notion of sea-faring persons, considering this as ominous of their approaching shipwreck, "were troubled; and they cried out for fear: saying, it is an apparition. For they all saw him," the moon being then at the full, but without affording sufficient light to distinguish him by his features. "And immediately Jesus spoke to them, and said: have a good heart, it is I, fear not." On hearing his voice, they instantly knew him, and regained their former tranquility of mind. "And Peter," full of faith and love, "making answer, said; Lord, if* it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters. And he said: come. And Peter coming down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind strong," which probably changed suddenly, and drove the waves against him, "he was afraid; and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying; Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus, stretching forth his hand, took hold of him, and said to him: O thou of little faith,* why didst thou doubt? They were willing therefore to take Jesus into the ship, and he went up to them into the ship. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased; and they were far more astonished in themselves: for they understood not concerning the loaves; for their heart was blinded," otherwise they would not have been so surprised on this occasion, if they had reflected on the greatness of that miracle. "And they that were in the boat, came and adored him, saying: indeed thou art the Son of God. And presently the ship," by a new miracle, "was at the land to which they were going. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Genesareth,"† about twelve

* Peter by saying *if*, did not doubt in faith, as Calvin pretends; nor was he guilty of any arrogance, in praying our Lord to come to him upon the waters, as others conjecture; for our Lord granted his request, which he would not have done, had it proceeded from arrogance or presumption, or been accompanied with a wavering in faith. Thus St. Jerome and St. Hilary.

* Great must have been the faith of Peter, who believed himself to be able to do what Christ did, and with his assistance to walk on the raging waters; nevertheless, he was afterwards seized with a sudden, indeliberate human fear, which abated something of his confidence. By this confidence in God, we learn what we can do by the divine assistance; and by his fear what we are of ourselves; also, that no one receives from God the strength he stands in need of, but he who feels, that of himself he is entirely without strength, according to the reflection of St. Austin (Sec. 76.)

† Christ did not land directly at Capharnaum, but according to St. Matthew and St. Mark, first passed through Genesareth, and perhaps reach Capharnaum about mid-day.

miles from Bethsaida, "and set to the shore. And when they were gone out of the ship, the men of that place immediately knew him: and running through that whole country, they began to carry about on beds those who were ill, where they heard he was; and they brought to him all that were diseased, and whithersoever he entered, into towns, or into villages, or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment: and as many as touched him were healed."

CHAPTER LIX.

THE DISCOURSE OF JESUS CONCERNING THE HEAVENLY BREAD. JOHN VI.

"The next day after the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, "the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was no other ship there but" that "one" wherein the disciples crossed the sea, "and that Jesus had not entered into the ship with" them, "but that his disciples were gone away alone. But other ships came in from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they had eaten the bread, the Lord giving thanks. When therefore the multitude," after waiting some time, "saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they took shipping" in the said vessels, "and came to Capharnaum seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him, on the other side of the sea, they said to him: Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus," without paying any regard to this question, "answered them and said: Amen, amen I say to you, you seek me, not because you have seen miracles," and are thereby induced to believe in me; but you seek me" merely "because you did eat of the loaves and were filled," and hence you are led to expect a continuance of supernatural refreshment. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth,* but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you; for him hath God the Father sealed," and sanctioned as it were, by letters patent attested by as many seals as he has wrought miracles in your presence. "They said therefore unto him, what shall we do that we may work the works of God," and obtain of him eternal life? "Jesus answered and said to them; this is the work of God," which he requires of you, "that you believe in him whom he hath sent," to be your Master, your Lawgiver, the Mediator of your salvation, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. They readily understood, that in saying this, he spoke concerning himself. "They said therefore to him: what sign therefore dost thou show, that we may see and believe thee" to be the Son of God and the Messiah? And foreseeing that he might with great propriety allege the recent miracle of feeding five thousand

* That is, according to the Hebrew idiom, labour not so much for earthly as for heavenly things.

persons with five loaves, they anticipate this obvious answer, by contrasting it with what Moses performed in the desert. It is true, say they, that you have once fed five thousand persons with five loaves: but "our fathers," to the number of 600,000, "did eat," not for once, but during forty years, "manna in the desert;" a species of food this, infinitely superior to barley bread, "as it is written; he gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven;" the manna only came from the clouds, and was called the bread from heaven, because it was a figure of it: "but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world;" that is a life of immortality and eternal happiness to all who worthily receive it.

From these words the Jews fancied to themselves a kind of real bread more delicious than the manna, which they were to enjoy during the whole course of their lives. "They said therefore unto him: Lord, give us always this bread. And Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst."*

At the moment when Jesus styled himself the bread of heaven, the Jews, it seems, gave evident marks by their countenances, that they did not believe him. He therefore added: "But I said unto you" already, "that you also have seen me," and witnessed my miracles, "and you believe not." But in order to pique their jealousy upon this occasion, he declares to them, that there will always be persons who will believe in him, and who by a persevering faith, will find in him their eternal salvation. This his meaning he expresses in a more circumscribed manner, by saying that he will not expel them from his house. If you do not believe in me, it is because you are not of the number of those whom my Father hath given me, for "all that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me," by an humble and sincere faith, "I will not cast out. Because I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me, Now this is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day," to live eternally with me. "And this is the will of my Father that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son" with the eyes of faith, "and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day," to enter into a glorious and incorruptible life. "The Jews therefore," instead of believing in Jesus Christ, in in order to be of the happy number of those whom his Father had given him, "murmured at him, because he had said; I am the living bread which came down from heaven. And they said," refuting as it were this his assertion: "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how then saith he, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said to them: murmur not among yourselves; no man can come to me, except the Father who

* The terms of *coming to him*, and *believing in him*, are synonymous.

hath sent me draw him," by his special grace. "and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets" concerning those who shoud believe in me, "and they shall all be taught of God. Every one" therefore "that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned" of him who I am, "cometh to me" by faith and obedience. "Not that any man hath seen the Father, but he who is" born "of God: he" indeed "hath seen the Father." As to others, when the Scripture says they are taught of God, this is to be understood of an interior spiritual instruction, which takes place in the soul, and does not fall under the senses: but which is not the less real on that account, because it is the heart which hears the voice of this invisible teacher. "Amen, amen I say unto you" again, "he that believeth in me hath everlasting life." It is thus Christ concludes this first part of his discourse, which treats of faith as a necessary condition required by him from mankind, previously to his imparting to them his heavenly bread, which lasts for ever.

After having thus stated the necessity of divine faith in those who wish to partake of this heavenly bread, Jesus proceeds to the seeond part of his discourse, in which he fully explains what that bread of life is which he is about to impart to mankind in the mystery of the holy eucharist. He therefore again declares, first, that he himself is the bread of eternal life, and mentions the several properties peculiar to it; secondly, he applies to his own person and to his own flesh the idea of this bread, such as he has defined it. Beginning with the former of these, he says. "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead;" but "this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, with a lively and active faith, "he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven," to give life to the world. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give" at my last supper, "is my flesh for the life of the world." *

The Jews already greatly scandalized at Jesus for his having styled himself the living bread which came down from heaven, were now much more so, on hearing these last words, which conveyed to their minds, in their plain obvious sense, that Jesus would really give to them his own flesh to eat; but with regard to the manner in which he was to give it, they falsely represented to themselves that he was to cut his body in pieces and distribute it amongst them in a bloody state, the very idea of which struck them with horror and disgust. "The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying: how can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them," in order to confirm the notion they had formed of a real eating of his body, and to remove all metaphorical interpretation of his words: "Amen, amen I say unto you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." But "he that

* Compare the words here spoken with those he delivered at his last supper, and you will see that what he promises here was then fulfilled, when taking the bread, and distributing it, he says: "*this is my body which is given for you.*" Hence the holy fathers have always explained this 6th, chap. of St. John. as spoken of the blessed sacrament.

eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him," as food abideth in him who takes it. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father," a divine life, always proceeding from him, "so he that eateth me," first, by faith, by believing in me, and secondly, by a real manducation of my body and blood in the holy communion, "the same also shall live by me. This is" truly "the bread that came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna † and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever;" for his soul shall live here by a life of justice, and hereafter by a life of glory; and his body likewise shall be raised up to a blessed immortality in the day of the general resurrection. "These things he said teaching in the synagogue in Capharnaum," in the midst of a very numerous assembly, whereof a part consisted of those whom he had recently fed in the desert. "Many therefore of his disciples hearing it, said: this saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: doth this scandalize you," and appear unworthy of your belief in the present state of things, whilst I am with you? "If then you shall see the Son of man ascending up" into heaven, "where he was before," how will you then believe that he can give you his flesh, when become glorious and immortal, and elevated to the right hand of God? For it is much easier to conceive that a thing present may be eaten, than to conceive the same of a thing absent and invisible to all our senses.

Christ next rebukes them for presuming to judge of his words by the testimony of their senses, and by their carnal and gross imagination. On the contrary, "it is the spirit," said he, "that quickeneth;* the flesh profiteth nothing;" for it cannot penetrate these sublime mysteries. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life," and therefore, to understand them you must be animated with the spirit of God, and live the life of faith. "But there are some of you that" have not this spirit, and live not this life, and so "believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray him. And he said: therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to me," by an humble and firm faith, "unless it be given him by my Father. After this many of his disciples went back: and walked no more with him." Our Saviour, who saw them thus abandon him, and most feelingly resented their eternal loss, did not offer to call them back again: and yet this he would most certainly have done, if they had been under a mistake only in regard to his meaning; a mistake to which he

* How could this be so, if what he gives in the blessed sacrament be nothing but a bit of bread, as Protestants pretend?

† Can a bare figure be more excellent than the manna, which was a most admirable figure of Christ in many of its properties? or can a bit of mere bread, taken only in remembrance of Christ, be supposed to be a food by which we shall live for ever?

* To quicken, is a phrase usual in the Scriptures to express all the operations of God within us. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; or in other words: as it is the spirit which gives life, and the flesh without it is a senseless lump of clay, so a firm faith in the words which I have spoken, gives spirit and life to a christian soul.

himself had given rise, by his manner of speaking. It is indeed difficult to imagine, that Jesus would thus let his own disciples leave him, and run headlong to perdition, when a few words on his part would have been sufficient to undeceive them, if they had only mistaken his meaning. If this had been the case, he had only to tell them that he meant no more by all his discourse, than that they should believe in him. But no, this was not all: these disciples had heard his whole discourse, and were well assured, from the plain and obvious meaning of his words, that he promised to give them his real flesh to be their food; and not being able to understand how this could be, they were scandalized at it, and followed the example of the other unbelieving Jews. What a striking likeness is observable between Protestants and these incredulous Jews, who said, on this occasion, how can he give us his flesh to eat? Or rather, the former are much more blameable than the Jews, since against the words of Scripture, against the unanimous consent and authority of the Christian Church in all ages and parts of the world, they refuse to believe his real presence, and have nothing to say, but with the obdurate Capharnaites, how can this be done? Their answers and objections are reducible to this, when they tell us that the real presence contradicts their senses, their reason, and that they know it to be false. But let us now see how differently the apostles acted on this occasion.

When the apostate disciples had now withdrawn themselves, "then Jesus said to the twelve: will you also go away?" Here again we have another clear proof of the real presence. The twelve had heard all that passed; they had seen the Jews strive amongst themselves, and the disciples murmur and leave their Master: they understood what he said in the same literal sense the others had done; it could indeed bear no other meaning; but when Jesus put the above question to them, leaving them to their free choice, whether to follow him or withdraw themselves, "Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art Christ the Son of" the living "God," and therefore able to make good thy words, however hard and difficult they may appear to others. Admire here the noble simplicity of their faith, they believe the words of their Master, without the least hesitation; they look upon them as the words of eternal life; they believe them in that very meaning in which the others had refused to believe them; they believe them as containing a promise of giving them his real flesh to eat, and his real blood to drink; and they believe with a most firm and sincere faith, for this plain but noble reason, because he is Christ the Son of God, who is absolutely incapable of deceiving his creatures, and whose almighty power is perfectly able to fulfil his word, and to perform the promise which he here made them.

Judas, however, it would seem, did not acquiesce in the above public avowal made by Peter, and yet he resigned not his apostleship, nor did he withdraw from the company of Jesus, as some of the disciples had done. He found his advantage in carrying the

common purse, and in being the bearer of the alms bestowed upon his brethren. Knowing perfectly this his inward disposition, "Jesus answered them," with some restriction to the public profession which Peter had just made in the name of his brethren; and excepting Judas, yet without naming him, he said: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil," through avarice and incredulity? "Now he meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for he it was that was to betray him, being one of the twelve."

CHAPTER LX.

THE PHARISEES COMPLAIN THAT THE DISCIPLES EAT WITH UNWASHED HANDS: CHRIST, IN HIS TURN, REPROACHES THEM WITH VIOLATING THE LAW OF GOD, ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR HUMAN TRADITIONS, AND SHOWS THAT TRUE PURITY IS NOT MERELY EXTERNAL, BUT SEATED IN THE HEART.
MATT. XV. MARK VII. JOHN VII.

It has been remarked above by St. John, c. vi. ver. 4, that when Jesus withdrew into the desert of Bethsaida, the Passover was near at hand. We are therefore naturally led to expect that, after the discourse concerning the eucharist, this evangelist would relate, as usual, his journey to Jerusalem, there to keep the paschal festival. But he rather gives us to understand that he did not ascend thither on this occasion, on account of the imminent danger which would have threatened his life.* "After these things Jesus walked through Galilee; for he would not walk through Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. And the Pharisees," seeing he did not make his appearance during the festival, "assemble unto him," in Galilee, "and some of the Scribes coming from Jerusalem," join them. They had not, it seems, any intention at present of seizing on his person, but only of examining more narrowly into his doctrine and actions, that they might be better prepared to criminate him on some future occasion. On meeting with Jesus, therefore, they enter into an altercation with him, on the frivolous subject of his disciples eating with unwashed hands: whilst he, in his turn, justly reproaches them with guilt in a matter of the highest concern, and justifies both himself and his disciples, as to the pretended crime laid to their charge. "And when they had seen some of his disciples eat bread with common, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, eat not without often washing their hands, holding the tradition of the ancients: and when they come from the market, unless they be washed, they eat not: and many other things there are that

* Some interpreters are of a different opinion, and say that Jesus went on this occasion to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the Passover. But we follow the sentiment of St. Thomas (in chap. 6. Joan), which is more agreeable to the text of St. John. At least, if Jesus ascended to Jerusalem, his stay there must have been very short.

have been delivered to them to observe, the washings of cups, and of pots, and of brazen vessels, and of beds," or couches, on which they reclined at meals, according to the custom of those times. These traditions * were glosses or explanations of the law made by their forefathers, and were called the oral law, because they came by tradition, not being given in writing, as was the law of Moses. The Jews in general professed as much respect for these traditions as for the law of Moses, except the sect of the Caraites, who did not admit traditions. "And the Pharisees and Scribes," under this false notion of the obligation of such traditionary practices, coming to see Jesus, "asked him, saying: why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answering, said to them," by way of just retortion: "why do you also trangress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said: honour thy father and thy mother; and he that shall curse father or mother, let him be punished with death. But you say; whosoever shall say to his father or mother," when applying for relief under the pressure of want, "whatsoever corban (which is a gift) proceedeth from me, shall profit thee;" in other words: I have consecrated to God all that share of my goods which I could otherwise have imparted to you, and I am in duty bound to give the preference to God in the disposal of my property, whilst you will not fail to reap a spiritual advantage equally with me in all such offerings to the Deity. Whoever, therefore, said the Pharisees, shall thus address his indigent parents, he is no longer bound to attend to their wants, "and he shall not" be obliged to "honour his father and mother," by relieving them. "And further, you suffer him not to do any thing" more "for his father or mother, making void the word of God, and the commandment of God, by your own tradition which you have given forth." Jesus reproached them likewise with many other similar traditions, equally founded upon injustice, which are not particularized by the Evangelists. "And many other things," says he, "you do like to these."

Considering then the Pharisees and the doctors of the law as living in the constant habit of hypocrisy, or rather of an insatiable avarice, disguised under the false cloak of religion, Jesus applied to them the prophecy of Isaias: "Hypocrites," said he to them, "well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: this people honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching" not the law of God, but the "doctrines and precepts of men: * for

* The traditions here alluded to were collected in seventy-two books, and composed the *Cabbala*. They were kept, it is said, by Gamaliel and other heads of the Sanhedrim, until the destruction of Jerusalem. About 120 years after this, Rabbi Judas composed a book of them, called the *Mishna*, that is, the second law, which is indeed the most ancient collection of traditions that the Jews have. Three hundred years after, R. Jonathan meeting with more traditions, compiled them into a larger volume; and one hundred years later, another Rabbi made a collection of such as were found among the Jews who remained at Babylon. These two are a kind of supplement and explication of the *Mishná*, one of which is called the *Talmud* of Jerusalem, and the other of Babylon, and it is by them the Jews are still governed in ecclesiastical matters.

* It is evident that Christ here speaks of such doctrines, precepts, and traditions as were contrary to the law of God, or of nature, as that of neglecting parents under pretence of giving to God, or such at least as were vain and frivolous, as that of often washing hands. No one, therefore, can from hence conclude that all traditions or doctrines delivered

leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and of cups: and many other things you do like to these," equally vain and insignificant. "And he said to them," condemning in a vein of irony these their ill regulated practices of religion; finely done, you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own traditions" with the greater punctuality, as if they were more perfect than the laws of the decalogue. "And again, calling the people, he said to them; hear me all of you and understand. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which proceed from a man, those are they that defile a man. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear." He entered not into any further explication of this subject before the Pharisees, because they were undeserving of it, and thus the obscurity of his words afforded them an ample field for their censures. "Then came his disciples, and said to him: dost thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word were scandalized." They hereby insinuated, that on his part it might not be improper to soften what to them appeared harsh in his decision, in order thereby to appease the minds of the Pharisees, apparently much irritated, especially as by their weight and authority they might become very formidable enemies to him. "But he answering" to this suggestion, which was grounded on human policy, "said," that nothing was to be apprehended from the power and malice of the Pharisees, because their sect would be extremely short-lived if compared with the religion which he was come to establish. This is the meaning of the figurative expression employed by him, when he said: "every plant," that is, every doctrine, "which my Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

He further answered, that they need not be anxious concerning the Pharisees, nor their ill founded scruples: "Let them alone," said he, "they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit."

By this answer we are taught that we are not to be troubled at the scandal which some persons lightly take at our conduct, and even at our good works, whilst the real cause of such scandal is solely in themselves; that is, in the malice of their own hearts: but we are at the same time taught to act with prudence and discretion towards such persons as are weak, and who, being innocently shocked at the apparent novelty of our words or actions, require only a proper explanation to rectify their misconceptions. Jesus Christ is a striking example of this, in the difference of his behaviour on this

from one age to another, that have been constantly taught and delivered in the Catholic Church, to which Christ promised the assistance of the spirit of truth, are to be rejected as void of authority. Christ himself delivered his doctrines by preaching to his disciples, with whom he promised to be to the end of the world: the disciples by preaching and teaching, delivered them to others: none of them wrote till many years after the Christian religion was founded; and St. Paul, in one of his first Epistles, about twenty years after Christ's ascension, tells the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. i. 8.) that their faith was spread in every place, so that it was not necessary for him to add any thing. And again he orders them to stand fast and hold the TRADITIONS which they had been taught, whether by word of mouth, or by epistles. (2 Thess. ii. 14.) It is equally groundless to pretend from hence, that the precepts of the Church in matters of discipline, are not binding and obligatory, for Christ himself hath commanded all to hear and obey the Church, and its lawful pastors. These, indeed, may be called precepts of men, but they are precepts of men invested with power and authority from God, and of whom Christ himself said, Luke x. 16. "He that hears you, hears me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me."

occasion towards the Pharisees and towards his own disciples, who to all appearance, were equally scandalized. "And when he was come into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked him the parable. And Peter," in the name of the rest, "said: expound to us this parable. But he said," surprised as it were at their stupidity, "are you also yet without understanding," and "so void of knowledge?" Then he condescended to explain the subject to them as follows; "understand you not that every thing from without, entering into a man, cannot defile him,* because it entereth not into his heart," nor into the blood, which by circulation passes through the heart, "but goeth into the belly," whence it is separated from the other parts of the food, "and goeth out" by the usual way "into the privy, purging all meats," Jesus had not here an idea of alluding to what might vitiate or infect the blood, but only to that which might defile the soul in the eyes of God; yet as the Apostles, who understood him in a gross and material sense, erroneously confounded these two meanings, it became necessary to instance this process of nature, in order to make it understood by the Apostles, that our food cannot possibly defile the soul. "And," therefore to rectify still more their ideas, "he told them the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart; and those things," says he, "defile a man: for within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false testimonies, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within," and "these are the things that defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man."

CHAPTER LXI.

THE CANANEAN WOMAN. MATT. XV. MARK VII.

"And Jesus went from thence," i. e. from Galilee, "and retired into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;* and entering into a house, he would that no

* Matt. xv. 11. *What entereth into the mouth, &c.* We must sincerely pity those who blindly pretend from hence, that to eat flesh meat on fasting days cannot defile a man. It is not any uncleanness in the meat itself, as the Manicheans pretended, which defiles the soul; but it is a contempt and disobedience of the laws of the Church, which, on such occasions, defile the consciences of the transgressors. And thus, when Adam ate the forbidden fruit, it was not the apple which entered into the mouth, but the disobedience to the law of God which defiled him. If a man make himself drunk with this same plea, that what enters by the mouth, &c., is not the answer obvious, that it is not the wine, but the intemperance, contrary to the law of God, which defileth him. As St. Paul says, 1 Cor. vi. 10. "drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of God."

* Tyre and Sidon were both seated on the Mediterranean sea, about twenty miles distant from each other, and the country adjoining to them, which lay to the west and north of Galilee, was called the coast or territories of Tyre and Sidon. The old inhabitants of this tract were descendants of Canaan, (for Sidon was his eldest son,) and continued in possession of it much longer than they did of any other part of the country. The Greeks called it Phœnicia, and when by right of conquest it became a province of Syria, it took the name of Syrophœnicia; and hence the woman who St. Matthew calls a Cananite, is by St. Mark styled a Syro-

man should know it, and he could not be hid. For a woman of Canaan, who came out of those coasts," and "whose daughter had an unclean spirit, as soon as she heard of him," came, and "crying out, said to him"* as he, was entering the house: "have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Jesus answered her not a word; and his disciples came and besought him" in her favour, "saying: send her away, for she crieth after us. And he answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel," and not to the Gentiles, whose conversion to the faith is reserved for a future period. "But she," not discouraged, "came in and fell down at his feet, [for the woman was a Gentile,† a Syrophœnician born] and adored him, saying: Lord help me: and she besought him," in this posture of profound adoration, that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. "Who answering said to her: Suffer first the children to be filled, for it is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs," i. e. to the Gentiles, who are frequently in scripture called dogs, on account of their barefaced impiety in publicly prostituting themselves to the worship of idols. "But she," notwithstanding this refusal, did not despair of success, and preserving both her temper and her hopes, at length obtained the object of her request by means of an answer equally acute and humble, which our Lord himself suggested to her: for allowing the justice of Christ's observation, "she answered and said," taking advantage of it: "Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat, under the table, of the crumbs of the children that fall from the table of their masters." May it therefore be granted to us Gentiles to gather a small part of this abundance of graces which you diffuse amongst the Jews. "Then Jesus," overcome as it were by her pious importunity, "answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt. For this" thy "saying," so full of faith and humility, "go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And" accordingly "her daughter was cured from that hour. And when she was come into her house, she found the girl lying upon the bed, and that the devil was gone out."

Our Blessed Saviour, says St. Chrysostom, refused at first to listen to the petition of this Cananean woman, that by her example he might insruct us, with what faith, humility, and perseverance we ought to pray. To make his servants the more sensible of his mercy, and the more eager to obtain it, he often seems to pay no attention to their prayers, till he has exercised them in the virtues of humility and patience. Ask, says he, and you shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened to you.

phœnician and Gentile, as being both by religion and language a Greek.

* It is probable that the woman first cried out before the door, and assembled a crowd, and then went into the house.

† She is called *ellenis*, (i. e. Græca) Syrophœnician, and Cananean; *ellenis* on account of her religion, which was Pagan, Syrophœnician and Cananean as to her country. The Hebrews gave the name of *Cananean* to those who inhabited Tyre and Sidon, and the neighbouring coast, Num. xiii. 30. &c. and the Greeks called them Syrophœnicians to distinguish them from the Phœnicians of Africa who were a colony of them.

CHAPTER LXII.

CHRIST CURES A DEAF AND DUMB PERSON, AS ALSO MANY OTHER SICK PEOPLE.
MATT. XV. MARK VII.

"And when Jesus had passed away from thence, going out of the coasts of Tyre, he came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. This district was so called, because it comprised ten cities, some of which were situated on the east, and others on the west of the river Jordan. The first and principal city was Scythopolis, and the rest, according to Pliny, were Philadelphia, Raphana, Gadara, Hippos, Dion, Pella, Gerasa, Canatha, and Damascus, although others reckon them differently. "And they bring to Jesus one deaf and dumb," or, as it is in the Greek, one who had an impediment in his speech; "and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him," in order to his cure. In healing this man Jesus made use of various exterior ceremonies, and in so doing he has fully authorised the use which the Catholic Church makes of ceremonies in the administration of the holy sacraments. "And having taken him aside from the crowd, he put his fingers in his ears, and spitting he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven he groaned, and he said to him: Ephphetha, which is" in the Syriac language, "be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them against it, so much the more did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying, he hath done all things well: he hath made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

It is to be observed that all these actions, as performed by Jesus, were mysterious, and represented to succeeding ages the difficulty there is in restoring sight to such minds as are spiritually blind, or hearing to such as are become deaf to the voice of God: it is with a view to this mysterious sense that the Church has, in imitation of Christ, adopted these as part of her ceremonies in the administration of the sacrament of baptism.

1. In performing this cure, Jesus separated the dumb person from the crowd, thereby to represent to us the banishment of the first man out of paradise, after his sin. In like manner, the Church separates the catechumens, or those that are to be baptized, from the rest of the faithful, by causing them to remain at the door of the church or chapel. 2. Jesus put his fingers into the ears of the deaf man, and touched his tongue with his spittle. Thus in conferring baptism, the priest touches with his spittle the ears of the person to be baptized, these being the organs by which faith and

instruction are to be conveyed to him: he also puts a little salt into his mouth, as it were to make his taste more susceptible of the sweetness of God's commandments, and of the mysteries of Jesus Christ; likewise to impart to him by the salt, which is an emblem of wisdom, a wise discernment of truth from falsehood, and thus to season his soul against the corruption of sin. 3. Jesus looked up to heaven and sighed, as it were to lament the spiritual deafness of mankind, who, unless spiritually assisted from above, neither listen to the voice of God nor to the law of nature. Thus also the priest breathes three times upon the face of the child to be baptized, in order, by this species of sighing, to drive away from him the wicked spirit which renders him deaf and dumb. 4. Jesus commanded the ears of the dumb man to be opened. Thus the priest using the same word of command, Ephphetha, enjoins the mind and heart to expand themselves, so as to receive the instructions which will be given; and each individual Christian should consider this word of command, be thou opened, as again repeated to him as often as he hears explained the mysteries and morality of the gospel. From this example of Christ we may learn, that these sacred ceremonies employed in baptism most justly claim our respect and veneration, both on account of the ends for which they are used, the sacred truths and instructions which they represent, and on account of the authority by which they are instituted. With good reason, therefore, the Church in the general Council of Trent condemns all those who shall presume to say that it is lawful to despise or ridicule, or by private authority to alter or change these or any of the received and approved ceremonies of the Church.*

Now when Jesus had wrought the above-mentioned cure, "going up into a mountain he sat there. And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others: and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them. So that the multitude marvelled, seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see; and they glorified the God of Israel."

CHAPTER LXIII.

JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND AND UPWARDS, WITH SEVEN LOAVES AND A FEW SMALL FISHES.* MATT. XV. MARK VIII.

THIS multitude of people continued with Jesus three whole days, being still eager to hear his instructions, and attracted likewise by the greatness of his miracles. Seeing their attachment to him, he displayed in their behalf, first, his fatherly care of them, and secondly, his divine power. By the former, he gave proofs of his being the Saviour of man, and by the latter, of his possessing a sovereign control over the works

* See chap. 57. for the first multiplication of the loaves.

* Sess. 7. Can. 17.

of the creation. "And Jesus in those days again, when there was a great multitude" with him "and had nothing to eat, having called his disciples together, said to them: I have compassion on the multitude; for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way; for some of them are come from afar off." He thus gave his disciples a sufficient insight into his intention, by showing the necessity of his working a miracle upon this occasion. "And his disciples," as if not remembering what Jesus had done before on a similar emergency, "answered him: from whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? Whence then can we get so many loaves in the desert as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus said to them: how many loaves have you? But they said seven and a few little fishes. And he commanded the people to place themselves on the ground. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks to his heavenly Father," for that providential care with which he supplies our wants, even in a miraculous manner when necessary for us, "he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes; and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they all eat and were filled: and they took up seven baskets of what remained of the fragments," to intimate that God recompenses with a liberal hand the alms that are given for his sake. "And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides children and women," who probably amounted to as many more. "And he sent them away, and immediately going up into a ship with his disciples," in order to prevent their following him, "he came into the parts of Dalmanutha, into the territories of Magedan,"* on the east coast of the sea of Galilee, between Gerasa and Corozain.

The miracle here wrought by Christ in feeding so great a multitude, was unquestionably a wonderful effect of his power; yet, as St. Austin observes, it was not a greater work than what he continually performed for the subsistence and nourishment of the whole human race. Whether God at once multiplies in his own hands, a few loaves, and makes them capable of satisfying four thousand persons: or by the general laws of nature which he has established, multiplies the seed in the earth for the food of mankind, the miracle, says this holy Father, is the same, and an effect of the same Almighty power. However, though both these works are equally the effects of Omnipotence, we are nevertheless very differently affected by them. The extraordinary works which God is pleased occasionally to display, never fail to make a lively impression on us, because we there discover his immediate power exerting itself in an unusual manner; whilst the constant and daily operations of the same power

* In the Greek it is *Magdala*: but the best copies have *Magadan*, and it appears from St. Jerome and St. Austin, that this was the ancient reading. St. Mark has Dalmanutha, because these two places, Magadan or Magedan and Dalmanutha were in the same country, which therefore was indifferently called by either of the two names Here is still at this present day, a *Medan* or fair, which is held near the lake *Phiala*, near the source of the Jordan. Egesippus calls it *Melda* or *Meldan*, which may possibly have been changed into Dalmanutha. See Calmet, and Reland. Palæst. l. 1. c. 41. p. 246.

in the ordinary productions of nature pass unnoticed, because we refer them merely to secondary causes; not reflecting on the primary cause which first established these laws, and which continually preserves them in their course. While the beneficent hand of Providence daily employs in our service innumerable physical causes we pay no regard to them; with the most shameful indifference we behold all the elements of nature rendered subservient to our wants; but reason and faith should correct this mistake, and convince us, that God is equally great, equally deserving of our praise and adoration, whether he gives laws to nature for our subsistence, or suspends those laws for our instruction. We are no less indebted to the bounty of his providence for the helps which we receive by the ordinary course of secondary causes, than if they were immediately conferred upon us by the miraculous exertions of Omnipotence. The fertility of the holy land was a benefit equally great as the manna of the desert.

CHAPTER LXIV.

JESUS REPROVES THE PHARISEES FOR REQUIRING A SIGN IN THE HEAVENS, AND CAUTIONS HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST HYPOCRISY.* MATT. XVI. MARK VIII. LUKE XII.

"AND there came to him the Pharisees and Sadducees," persons widely different from each other in their religious sentiments, but united in their design of persecuting Jesus. "And they began to question with him, asking him to show them a sign from heaven." This they did by way of "tempting him." They mistrusted, it seems, all such miracles as Jesus had hitherto wrought, by touching the parties whom he healed; and they grounded their incredulity upon the false notion, that miracles of this kind might be merely the effect of some occult quality. But they considered other miracles less suspicious and objectionable, which were effected by a single word upon distant objects, exposed to public view in the heavens or the clouds.

Jesus so far condescended to them as to propose two signs excellently well adapted to the nature of their religious tenets, and to prove his divine mission. 1. The Pharisees were remarkable for observing the times and seasons, and hence formed their conjectures of future events: to these he held forth the fulfilling of the ancient prophecies as a sign in his regard which became every day more and more apparent. 2. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the body: to these he gave, as a sign, his own future resurrection, prefigured by that of Jonas, who came alive out of the whale's belly. But to both these descriptions of persons, he absolutely refused to give any present sign, such as was the object of their unbelieving curiosity.

He began by referring the Pharisees to the signs already discernible of the time of the Messiah's coming into the world, and he took advantage of their known or pretended abilities in prog-

* See their first request, chap. xlix. 6.

nosticating natural events, to reproach them for their ignorance with regard to that most happy period which the scriptures so clearly described and pointed out. "But he answered and said to them: When it is evening you say: it will be fair weather, for the sky is red: And in the morning, to-day there will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering. When you see a cloud rising from the west,* presently you say; a shower is coming, and so it happeneth:† And when you see the south wind blow, you say: there will be heat; and it cometh to pass. You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth," from the different signs in the clouds, "and can you not know the signs of the times," and of the coming of the Messiah, pointed out by the prophets, whereof many are already fulfilled, and others on the point of being so. These signs were, 1. The translation of the sovereignty or sceptre of Juda to foreign princes. 2. The accomplishment of the seventy weeks of years prophesied by Daniel, amounting in the whole to four hundred and ninety years, the end of which was now drawing nigh. 3. The miraculous powers attributed to the Messiah by the prophets, and which Jesus had so frequently exerted in their presence. "And why, even of yourselves," said he, "do you not judge that which is just," and instead of fruitlessly requesting fresh signs, why do you not make a proper use of your sagacity, so successful in natural things, to form a more equitable judgment in my regard? He thus insinuated, that so far from asking for fresh signs, which in their respect were totally unnecessary, they ought rather to blame their past neglect, in not duly studying the ancient signs which foretold the coming of the Messiah; or they ought to blame their present voluntary blindness in shutting their eyes to all these signs; or finally, their own malignant disposition, in explaining away, by false interpretations, these prophecies concerning the Messiah, which were purposely designed by the Almighty for their guidance and direction. "And sighing deeply in spirit," at their unaccountable conduct, "he saith: why doth this generation ask a sign? Amen, amen I say to you, a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." The meaning of this is, that his future resurrection from the dead, which would take place three days after his death, was prefigured by the resurrection of Jonas, who was buried during three days in a whale's belly; and the accomplishment of this miraculous prodigy would prove to them the divine origin of his person and of his mission, and ought to have particular weight with the Sadducees, who admitted neither the resurrection of the body, nor the immortality of the soul. "And he left them and went away. And leaving them he went up again into the ship, and passed to the other side of the water. And when his disciples were come over the

* In Palestine, the Mediterranean sea, which is to the west, brought on clouds and rain; but the south wind blowing from the hot countries of Arabia and Egypt, produced extraordinary heats.

† St. Luke relates this without any designation either of time or place, we have therefore here inserted it on account of the connection it has with what is taken from St. Matthew.

the water, they had forgotten to take bread; and they had but one loaf with them in the ship. And he" taking every occasion to instruct them, "charged them, saying: take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod. But they" no sooner heard him say this, than they recollected their having omitted to make provision for their passage, and they "thought within themselves, saying: because we have taken no bread," therefore he gives us this caution.

In this they committed two faults. 1. By a false interpretation they explained literally what Jesus had said figuratively of the leaven of the Pharisees, and through a blameable stupidity imagined that he thus forbad them to eat with persons of those two sects, or to buy bread of such as were attached to them. 2. It seems that they became unreasonably alarmed in this emergency, showing thereby a diffidence in Jesus, such as was extremely unsuitable to their apostolical character. "Which" secret thoughts "Jesus knowing saith to them: why do you think within yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that you have no bread? do you not yet know nor understand? Have you still your heart blinded? Having eyes, see you not? and having ears, hear you not?" Having thus rebuked them for their want of knowledge and penetration, he further upbraids them for their want of faith and confidence in him. "Neither do you remember," said he, "when I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They said to him twelve. When also the seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took ye up? And they said to him seven. And he said to them: how, do you not yet understand that it was not concerning bread I said to you: beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?" He, however, explained no further what he had said here, but left them to guess at his meaning, "Then," at length, "they understood that he said not that they should beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees;" because the nature of it was to cause in the mind the same effects as leaven in the dough; that is, sourness and fermentation; in other words, anger, ambition, pride, and hypocrisy. Such indeed were the effects ensuing from their pharisaical traditions, some of which were empty and vain, whilst others so far from promoting true piety, were directly contrary to the law of God. As to the doctrines of the Sadducees or Herodians, they tended, like those of modern free-thinkers, to subvert all religion, by cutting off all hopes of happiness in a future state.

CHAPTER LXV.

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA. MARK VIII.

"And," on their landing, "they came to Bethsaida, and they bring to him a blind man, and they besought him that he would touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out of the town," which appears from the Evangelists to have been a small place, and not surrounded with walls: "and spitting upon his eyes, laying his hands on him, he asked him if he saw any thing; and looking up, he said: I see men as it were trees walking. After that again he laid his hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly. And he sent him into his house, saying: go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody."

In this blind man we may behold a figure of the spiritual blindness which is caused by sin, and particularly by the vice of infidelity. In this deplorable state the bright rays of revelation no longer strike the understanding; the certainty of death, the rigour of God's judgments, the eternity of hell's torments, and the other terrible truths of religion, make no impression; the most consoling articles of faith, such as the benefit of redemption, the contemplation of the divine mercy, the hope of an eternal reward, excite no emotion, no sentiment whatever. These men, whom Job calls rebels to the light, are in the midst of religion, like the blind man in the midst of nature: they are surrounded by its wonders, and enjoy them not; their soul, blinded and insensible, no longer receives any impression of confidence or hope, of fear, or of love. But amid these traits of resemblance between corporal and spiritual blindness, there is one difference, which is still more deplorable. He who is deprived of the light of the body, is sensible at least of his loss; knowing his unhappy state, he is desirous to be delivered from it: and if he hears of any remedy likely to prove efficacious, he seeks eagerly to procure it with the utmost impatience. With regard to him who is spiritually blind, the case is just the reverse: he does not know his miserable situation: he loses all sense of his misfortune: he calls good evil, as the prophet Isaiah says, and evil good: that darkness in which he is bewildered, he takes to be light, and that light which you show him, he considers as darkness. He views as his happiness what is the extremity of his misery, and instead of desiring an end of his blindness, he fears whatever may withdraw him from it. The first grace of conversion which we should solicit for a soul in this state, is, that she may know her miserable situation, and be inspired with an ardent desire of her deliverance from it. Let us often beseech Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, to enlighten those are thus

sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, that they may direct their feet into the way of peace. The conversion of such a sinner is a great work: to change a corrupt heart, not less power is necessary than to change the order of nature. The cure of spiritual disorders is a prodigy of grace, in like manner as the sudden cure of corporal infirmities is an effect of Omnipotence.

CHAPTER LXVI.

ST. PETER'S PUBLIC CONFESSION OF JESUS CHRIST—HIS PRIMACY—HE IS REBUKED BY OUR LORD, WHO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, FORETELLS HIS DEATH, AND TEACHES THE NECESSITY OF CARRYING OUR CROSS. MATT. XVI. MARK VIII. LUKE IX.

"AND Jesus," departing from Bethsaida, "came into the quarters of Cæsarea Philippi," * a city so named to distinguish it from another Cæsarea, situated on the Mediterranean; "and it came to pass, that he sought a retired place for prayer, and as he was alone praying (his disciples were also with him)," he recommended to his heavenly Father both the important choice he was going to make of St. Peter to be the supreme head of his Church, as likewise the success of the communication he was about to make to all his apostles in general concerning his approaching death. "And" after this "Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi;" but it does not appear that he entered into Cæsarea itself. In all this country infidelity almost universally prevailed, and Christ foresaw he should have few or no followers. Wherefore it was on this occasion, when he was now no longer embarrassed by the surrounding multitudes, that he chose to impart to Peter his design of raising him to the first and most exalted dignity in his Church. To prepare him for this communication, he first required of him, by an act of faith, an avowal or confession of his divinity, and of his being the Son of God. After this he imparted to his apostles for the first time the intelligence of his approaching death: and lastly, he declared to them, and to all his followers, the necessity which each of them would be under of sharing in his sufferings and death, by carrying their respective crosses, and leading a mortified life.

When therefore Jesus had ended his prayer, they pursued their journey; "and in the way he asked his disciples, saying to them: whom do men say that the Son of man is? But they said; some John the Baptist," *

* It was usually called, by heathen writers, Paneas, from the adjoining spring Paneum, or Panium, which is commonly taken for the fountain head of Jordan.

* Those who held that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, were of the same opinion with Herod the tetrarch (Matt. xiv. 2.), and seem to have imbibed the notion of the Pharisees, who according to Josephus, used to say, that *a good man might easily return to life again*. Those who took him for Elias, adopted the general opinion of the nation, that Elias was to come before the Messiah, and anoint him when he came; and therefore, notwithstanding his doctrine and miracles, they could not conceive him to be the Messiah, so long as his mean appearance was contrary

risen again to life, "and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, (from his great zeal and courage in reproving the vices of the Pharisees), and others say that one of the former prophets is risen again. Then he saith to them: but whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter," full of faith and zeal above the rest of the apostles, "answered" both for himself and them, "and said: thou art Christ the Son of the living God," not by an adoptive filiation (which had already been ascribed to him by those who had hitherto styled him the Son of God), but by a real and natural filiation.* "And Jesus answering, said to him: blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee; but my Father who is in heaven," and who hath imparted to thee this important secret, by means of a supernatural light. "And I say to thee: that thou art Peter † (or rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." Thus did Jesus reward the public confession of St. Peter.

1. As the latter had openly named him the Christ or the Messiah, so he now confirmed to him the new name of Peter, which he had already given him, assuring him that thenceforth he should be a firm stone or rock (which the name of Peter imports), and that upon this rock, as a solid foundation, he would build his Church. In effect the Church being a visible edifice, the parts of which are mutually connected together by various bands, it became necessary that the whole should be erected upon a solid and visible foundation, upon which the several component parts resting securely, should jointly form what is styled the hierarchy of the Church. Moreover, as the Church of Christ was to be a permanent edifice, and to last to the end of time, this privilege of being the foundation stone was attached to all the successors of St. Peter.

2. He rewarded the confession of St. Peter, by promising to this his Church a duration equal to that of the world, in spite of all the efforts of its enemies: these enemies are principally the authors of schisms and heresies; and they may fitly be styled the gates of hell, because to this place they lead all those who blindly and

to their expectations: and those who thought him to be *Jeremias*, probably espoused the sentiment of some of their doctors, which was founded on the high character which God gives him. "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou wast out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a *prophet to the nations*." Jer. 1. 5.

* See the mysteries comprised in the illustrious confession of St. Peter, in Abrege de la S. Bible, p. 127.

† Thou art Peter (or rock) *and upon this rock* (that is, upon thee) *I will build my Church*, &c. This is the literal and genuine exposition of this passage, as Dr. Whitby, a learned Protestant divine, and a violent adversary of the Church of Rome, has proved by several arguments drawn from the text. And the following promise, ver. 19, of giving to St. Peter the keys of the Church, or *of the kingdom of heaven*, is a farther confirmation of it. For *keys*, in the Scripture style, denote *government*, or the *chief stewardship*, as Isa. xxii. 22. Rev. iii. 7. Dr. Whitby's exposition of St. Matt. xvi. 18. is as follows: "As a suitable return to thy confession, I say also to thee, that thou art by name Peter, that is a rock: and upon thee, who art this rock, I will build my Church, and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of making laws to govern my Church." T. 1. p. 143. Dr. Hammond, another Protestant divine, expounds it in the same manner. And p. 92, he says: "What is here meant by the keys, is best understood by Isaiah xxii. 22, where they signify ruling the whole family or house of the king: and this being by Christ accommodated to the Church, denotes the power of governing it."

obstinately take them for their guides. And though these gates of hell shall wage an uninterrupted war against the Church until the end of time, yet Christ here solemnly declares, that they shall never prevail against it, so far as to destroy or annihilate it, but that it shall continue unmoved through all ages.

3. He added, as a further reward, the promise of bestowing upon Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, assuring him, that whatever he should bind upon earth, should be bound also in heaven, and that whatever he should loose upon earth, should also be loosed in heaven. This promise extends not merely to the power of remitting or retaining sins, which was common to the other Apostles, but likewise to the sovereign power and authority of governing the Church, with a view to the spiritual good of souls, and to their acquiring eternal happiness. This power was the more necessary for the perfect administration of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, as without it many of the spiritual wants of the faithful would not have been sufficiently provided for. Moreover, as St. Peter was not to be immortal, and as the same spiritual wants which existed during his life, would subsist after its termination, it is clear to every impartial person, that this high privilege was not merely personal, but was to be handed down to all future successors of St. Peter.

"Then," Jesus not choosing that this confession of faith pronounced by St. Peter, should at that period be divulged, "he commanded his disciples, and he strictly charged them that they should not tell any man of him, that he was Jesus the Christ." And hence it appears that during the continuance of his ministry, neither he nor his Apostles clearly announced to the people this great article of faith, but left it to be inferred from his heavenly doctrines and surprising miracles. For whilst Jesus frequently styled God his Father, the miracles he performed loudly proclaimed him to be truly the Son of God.

The reason why he withheld from the public this article of our creed, the belief of which the Apostles afterwards strictly required from those on whom they conferred baptism, was lest it might prove a hinderance to his death; for as the Jews believed their Messiah to be immortal, those who might have placed their belief in Jesus as such, would never have acquiesced in his being condemned to death; or if they could not have prevented it, they would instantly have renounced him as their Messiah. Hence they whose conjectures the Apostles reported concerning his person, believed him to be either John the Baptist, Elias, or Jeremias, or some other of the ancient prophets; but it does not appear that any of them had formed the idea of his being the Christ, which is a certain proof that Jesus had not yet been announced to them under that quality. "From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples," thus prepared for the unwelcome intelligence, "that the Son of Man must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients, and by the high-priests, and the Scribes, and be killed; and after three days rise again. And he spoke the word openly," and without any of those figurative ways of speech, not

unusual in his other discourses. "And Peter," glowing with zeal and affection towards Jesus, and feeling an additional confidence from the dignity recently conferred on him, "taking him" aside, "began to rebuke him, saying: Lord, be it far from thee; this shall not be unto thee. Who turning about" again, "and seeing the disciples, threatened Peter, saying: go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal to me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." He styles him Satan, which word signifies an enemy, because he, however unknowingly or innocently, raised an opposition against the will of God, against the glory of Jesus, against the redemption of mankind, and against the destruction of the devil's kingdom; for all these things were to be effected by the sufferings and death of Jesus. These severe heads of accusation against Peter, are all comprised in this one, that he had no savour or relish for the things of God, but only for the things of this world; and that in consequence of such a relish, he was led to avoid ignominy, sufferings, and death, which yet are the means made use of by the Almighty, for the salvation of mankind. "Then Jesus, calling the multitude together with his disciples, said to all: if any man will come after me," and be my disciple, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Here are three conditions which Christ requires of all his followers: 1. They must deny themselves; that is, renounce their own will in every thing which is contrary to the will of God; they must be willing to part with their goods, their honour, their reputation, and even life itself, when God's service is concerned. 2. They must daily carry their cross, which alludes to the species of death which Jesus underwent for us; that is, they must bear with patience and resignation all such afflictions and sufferings as God shall please to send them, but particularly those which the world shall inflict upon them for his holy name, or for adhering to his holy law. 3. Each one must follow Jesus, carrying his cross, and must walk in his footsteps by an imitation of his virtues; that is, we must live up to the faith we profess, and have Jesus and his sacred passion ever before our eyes.

He further assigns two reasons for our complying with the above-mentioned conditions. The first is, that when the defence or the practice of our religion is in question, then an attachment to life is fatal to our eternal salvation. "For whosoever," says he, "will save his" temporal "life, shall lose it" for eternity. The second reason is drawn from that infinite happiness which will most assuredly be the reward of a death suffered for the sake of Jesus. "And whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel," a life of itself frail and perishable, and of a most uncertain tenure, "shall save it" in the next world in an immortal and infinitely more perfect state. He then explains the first of these reasons, and adds greatly to its force, by allowing, in the manner of a supposition, that a man by renouncing his belief in him, may not only save his life, but even gain thereby the dominion and possession of the whole world. Yet he declares such a person to be

not the less miserable and unhappy: "For what will it profit a man," says he, "if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his" immortal "soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For he that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels. For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works. And he said to them: Amen I say to you, that there are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God coming in power," and "till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." As these last words cannot be understood of the last coming of Jesus, some understand them of the glory which he received by his resurrection, others of the glorious establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ throughout the world, by the preaching of the gospel. But others, with greater probability, refer them to his transfiguration, an account of which is immediately subjoined by the Evangelists. This promise of a transitory view of his glory, he was induced to make, first, to prove what he had just asserted, viz. that he should one day come, in all the glory of his Father to judge each man according to his works; secondly, to afford by this glorious scene, some consolation to his Apostles, who had heard not without the greatest emotions of grief, the prediction of his approaching death, and the necessity they were under of following him.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST. MATT. XVII. MARK IX. LUKE IX.

JESUS delayed not long the execution of the promise which he had made of manifesting his glory. After a very short interval, during which nothing remarkable is mentioned, his transfiguration took place in the following manner, as related by three of the Evangelists. "And it came to pass about eight days * after these words, that he took unto him Peter, and James, and John * his brother; and he led them up into a high mountain apart." This, by tradition, is thought to be mount Thabor,† which is exceedingly high and beautiful, rising something like a

* St. Matthew says six days, not reckoning the day of the promise, nor the day of the transfiguration itself, whilst St. Luke takes both those days into the account, and so calls the interval *about* eight days, *osei emerai okto*, the word *osei* implying that the number here mentioned is not exact, as may be seen in Matt. xiv. 21. Luke i. 56. iii. 23. xxiii. 44. John iv. 6. xix. 14. &c. St. Jerome and St. Cyril.

* Peter, as being the head of the Apostolic College, James, as being the first of the Apostles who was to shed his blood for the faith, John, as being to survive the rest and to transmit to posterity the particulars of this glorious mystery,

† Mr. Maundrel informs us, that on the top of mount Thabor are three grottoes, made to represent the three tabernacles which St. Peter proposed to erect when transported with the glory of the transfiguration. *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, p. 112. He observes that the ascent is very difficult, but that the beautiful prospect from it well rewards the labour of ascending it; "for it is impossible," says he, "for the eye of man to behold any greater gratifi-

sugar loaf, in a vast plain, and was anciently covered with green trees and shrubs. It is situated in the midst of the lower Galilee, according to St. Jerome, almost at an equal distance from the Mediterranean and the sea of Tiberias, and about sixty miles from Cæsarea, where the promise of his transfiguration had been made. Wherefore "he went up" with these three favourite disciples, "into" this "mountain to pray: and whilst he prayed, the shape of his countenance was altered," not by a change of his features, but by the shining light and majesty of his glory. "And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments," being penetrated with those brilliant rays of light, "became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can make" equally "white." He thus appeared entirely transfigured by a miracle, which was itself but the interruption of a still greater miracle. For this effulgent glory with which Jesus was clothed for a few moments, was only the natural effect of the union of the Divinity with his human nature. It had been suspended, not without a degree of violence, from the first moment of his incarnation, and this suspension was in fact a much greater prodigy than that eclipse of the sun which happened at his death, and which continued three whole hours. On the present occasion therefore Jesus allowed a few of the rays of his glory to appear outwardly, which at other times he suppressed under the veil of his humility.

cation of this nature." Le Brune makes the same observation, and places Thabor at the distance of about twelve miles from the sea of Galilee, and eight from Nazareth.

The end or object proposed by Jesus in the exhibition of this mystery, was that of giving testimony to two fundamental truths of religion. First, to his being the Son of God, which Peter had in the presence of all his brethren lately confessed. Second, to the certainty of his approaching passion and death, which he had recently imparted to them, but which Peter, actuated by a zeal for his Master, had opposed to the utmost of his power. A third motive was to fortify the minds of his Apostles against the fear of persecutions, by giving them here a glimpse of that glory they might expect hereafter.

The first witness to vouch for the truth of the divine filiation of Jesus, was Jesus himself, clothed by his heavenly Father with that effulgence of glory which was due to the only Son of God. The two witnesses who vouched for the certainty of his approaching death, were the two most celebrated prophets of the old law. For "behold two men were talking with him, and they were Moses and Elias,* appearing in majesty. And they spoke of his" painful "decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem," this being the end of the law and the accomplishment of all the ancient prophecies. "But Peter, and they that were with him, were," at first, "heavy with sleep," it being night, "and waking," in consequence of the shining rays of light which struck their eyes, "they saw his glory, and the two men that

* It is a question among interpreters whether Moses, on this occasion, appeared in his *own* or in an assumed ærial body. As to Elias, they all agree that he really appeared in his own body; and the same is to be said of Moses, according to Tertullian, Origen, Irenæus, and St. Austin. See Suarez, 3. P. l. 45. Disput. 22. But St. Thomas, Salmeron, and Lyranus, are of a different opinion.

stood with him: and they were talking with Jesus." These they distinguish to be Moses and Elias, either by a divine inspiration, or by some part of their discourse which discovered who they were. The reason of this apparition, was doubtless to reconcile the minds of these disciples to that event which had so greatly scandalized them, I mean the death of Jesus, by giving it all the weight and sanction of the law and of the prophets, here represented by Moses and Elias. "And it came to pass, that as they were departing from him, Peter," in raptures of admiration and joy at the grandeur of the scene, "saith to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: for he knew not what he said:" otherwise he would never have desired that for the present time of trial on earth, which is reserved only for heaven: neither would he have contented himself with beholding only the glorified humanity of Christ, since this transient sight can bear no proportion to the beatific vision and contemplation of the Divinity itself. On the present occasion he tasted only a single drop, as it were, of that overflowing river which inebriates the heavenly Jerusalem, and all its blessed inhabitants: yet was he so transported by it, as to desire nothing more than a continuance of it. "And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them," apparently in the shape of a tent or pavilion. The Almighty, it seems, was pleased thus to fulfil the wish of Peter, thereby to show that he himself is the tent or pavilion, under the shade of which the blessed shall dwell for ever; for at the same moment the two prophets ascended in the air, and darting into this cloud, vanished from the sight of the three Apostles; "and they were afraid, when they entered into the cloud. And lo! a voice out of the the cloud, saying: this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." This was no other than the eternal Father, who thus acknowledged Jesus for his only begotten Son, and sanctioned the confession which Peter had made concerning him, authorizing likewise his whole doctrine, and commanding us to listen to it with all docility aud respect. "And whilst the voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone," so that no doubt could arise as to which of the three this sublime testimony referred. "And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus," observing their confusion, "came and touched them, and said to them: arise, and fear not. And they lifting up their eyes, and immediately looking about saw no man, any more but Jesus only with them," in his usual form. "And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead." The probable motive of this injunction was, that so wonderful an event might not be exposed to the incredulity, and rash censures of the Pharisees, who hated Jesus, and were ever disposed to calumniate and misrepresent even his most evident miracles, as we have seen above, chap. 49. &c. Jesus would likewise teach his followers to love the closest secrecy in all spiritual graces

and favours. "And they kept the word to themselves, inquiring one of another what this should mean," which Jesus had said on this occasion, "when he shall be risen from the dead."* They, however, ventured not to ask him any further explanation, under the apprehension of hearing what might prove extremely unpleasant to the affectionate feelings which they entertained for their divine Master.

After having here seen Elias, the three Apostles could not but recall to mind what they had always heard respecting that prophet, and which now appeared not easily reconcileable with what they had just witnessed; for instead of performing the office of precursor to the Messiah, and walking before him, as they had been taught to expect, they had now seen him withdraw himself with Moses: "and" therefore "his disciples," in order to clear up this difficulty, "asked" Jesus, "saying: why then do the Pharisees and Scribes say that Elias must come first? But he answering" to their request, entered into an explanation of that text of the prophet Malachy, by distinguishing his two comings. In regard to the second, which would be at the end of the world, he confirmed the opinion of the Pharisees with respect to Elias, and "said to them: Elias indeed shall come" before the last judgment: and "when he shall come first, he shall restore all things," by causing the Jews to enter into the bosom of the Church, in the same manner as Enoc will cause the strayed Gentiles to return to it; and thus will be formed, by a happy coalition, one only people: "and as it is written of the Son of Man that he must suffer many things and be despised," so Elias will have to undergo the same sufferings and indignities.

But as to the stress which the Pharisees laid upon this non-appearance of Elias, that Jesus was not Christ nor the Messiah, he answered, that in this particular they confounded his first coming, in which Elias was not to appear, with his second coming, which is certainly to be preceded by that prophet. But since they were so resolved to make this circumstance the criterion of their belief in him, as if each time of his coming was to be preceded by an Elias, Jesus declared to them, that even in this supposition they were without excuse, since Elias was come and had already fulfilled the office of forerunner to his first coming. "But I say to you," added Christ, "that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them.* Then the disciples understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist," who came possessing the spirit as well as the power of Elias: that is, with an ardent zeal of stirring

* Being taught out of the law, that *Christ was to abide for ever*, John xii. 34, and that *of his kingdom there should be no end*, Luke i. 33, they could not tell how to reconcile his death, which was to precede his resurrection, to the predictions of the prophets, and their own conceptions of his temporal kingdom; and therefore we may observe, that when Christ died, their hopes died with him: *we trusted* that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel (Luke xxiv. 21.), but at his resurrection they revived again, which made them ask: *wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel.* Acts i. 6.

* Hence we may infer, that the Scribes and Pharisees contributed by their councils to the death of St. John the Baptist. Some indeed suppose a nominative case understood; viz. *the Jews*, which would comprise both Herod and the chiefs of Galilee, as well as the priests and doctors of the law; the former, as the instigators of St. John's death; the latter, of that of Jesus Christ.

up mankind to repentance, though, in fact, he was a very different person. This mysterious transfiguration of our Lord, was one of the means which he made use of to confirm the faith of his Apostles, and to convince them, in a manner the most sensible, of his Divinity; and in effect, St. Peter has mentioned it in one of his Epistles, as a convincing evidence of that eternal truth.* Jesus Christ by exhibiting to his favourite Apostles the figure of a glorified body, was pleased to give them a foresight of that happy change which the bodies of his elect shall put on at the general resurrection. By that he inspired them with fresh zeal in his service, animated them with new courage to undertake and suffer great things for his holy name, and showed them how transcendent is the glory of that supernatural happiness which shall reward the light and momentary tribulations of this present life.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

JESUS CURES A PERSON BOTH LUNATIC AND DUMB.* MATT. XVII. MARK IX. LUKE IX.

"AND it came to pass the day following, when they came down from the mountain, there met him a great multitude; and when he was come to his disciples, he saw a great crowd about them, and the Scribes disputing with them. And presently all the people seeing Jesus, was astonished and struck with fear," probably at the appearance of majesty which yet remained visible in his countenance after his recent transfiguration; "and running to him, they saluted him. And he asked them: what do you dispute about among yourselves?" He seems here to have arrived at a seasonable moment, to rescue his disciples from the confusion they were under at the ill success they had met with in exorcising a possessed person. We may observe how their unsuccessful endeavours are supplied by the omnipotence of Jesus, who attributes their failure to the want of faith, of prayer, and of fasting, "And behold there came to him a man, one of the multitude," who "falling down on his knees before him, said; Master, I have brought my son, having a dumb spirit, for he is a lunatic,† and sufferеth much: for he falleth often into the fire, and often into the water; and a spirit seizeth him, who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away, and bruising him, he hardly departeth from him; and I brought him to thy disciples, and desired, and spoke to" them "to cast him out, and they could not cure him." Wherefore, "I beseech thee

* 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 18.

* See the first dumb demoniac, chap. 36. and the second, chap. 49.

† It appears from all the symptoms here mentioned, such as being convulsed, foaming at the mouth, falling into the fire, &c. that he was rather *epileptic* than *lunatic*. Both distempers indeed lie in the brain, and depend more or less on the changes of the moon. Hence the Greek work is *seleniazetai*, from *selene*, the *moon*, and answers exactly to the English *lunatic*, from *luna*.

look upon my son, because he is my only one;" yes, "Lord have pity on my son. Then Jesus answered and said: O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And they brought him, and as he was coming to him, when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him," and "threw him down and tore him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming. And Jesus," to convince the bystanders of the violence of the disorder, as well as of the difficulty of the cure, "asked his father how long time is it since this has happened unto him? But he said from his infancy: and oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him; but if thou canst do any thing, help us, taking pity on us. Jesus," who had healed many sick persons, independently of their faith, chose, in this instance, to insist on it as a previous condition, before he complied with his request. Wherefore he "saith to him: if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears, said: I do believe, Lord: help my unbelief," and supply the deficiency of my faith. "And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him: and enter not any more into him; and crying out and greatly tearing him, he went out of him; and he became as dead, so that many said, he is dead; but Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up, and he arose, and the child was cured from that hour; and he restored him to his father, and all were astonished at the mighty power of God. And when he was come into the house, then came the disciples to Jesus secretly, and" apprehensive lest they might have forfeited the gift of working miracles through their own misconduct, "asked him: why could not we cast him out? Jesus said to them: because of your unbelief. The Apostles said to the Lord: increase our faith.* And the Lord said: if you had faith like to a grain of mustard seed you might say to this mulberry tree, be thou rooted up, and be thou transplanted into the sea; and it would obey you. Amen I say to you" again, "if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say," even "to this mountain"† before you (pointing to mount Thabor), "remove from hence thither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you," which the glory of God and the salvation of souls shall call for at your hands. Besides a want of faith, Christ assigned a second cause of their ill success, and that was their neglecting to fast and pray. "But this kind," said he, "is not to be cast out but by prayer and fasting."

* St. Luke does not mention these words here, because he speaks only of the miracle without touching on what Christ said in the house on that occasion; but he places these words among many other instructions which Jesus gave to his Apostles, and which seem to have no relation to each other. The propriety therefore of inserting them in this place, will be manifest to the intelligent reader.

† This may be understood literally, as appears from St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, and from what the saints have done on certain occasions. See Butler's life of St. Greg. Thaumaturgus. We may likewise say with St. Jerome, that these mountains signify the most difficult things:

CHAPTER LXIX.

JESUS A SECOND TIME FORTELLS HIS DEATH, AND PAYS THE TRIBUTE OF TWO DRACHMAS, MATT. XVII. MARK IX. LUKE IX.

"AND departing from thence," that is, from the small town which is situated at the foot of mount Thabor, and which by some is called Cheseleth-Thabor, Jesus turned his whole thoughts to mount Calvary, which was to be the scene of a transfiguration very different from the preceding one. His mind being now intent upon going, without loss of time, into Judea, there to complete the end and design of his mission, "they passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it," and directed his route principally through such places as he had not before visited. "And when they were conversing together in Galilee, and every one wondered at all the things he did, he said to his disciples; lay you up in your hearts * these words, that the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day."

This unwelcome intelligence he imparted to them whilst yet in Galilee, where every one was in the greatest admiration at the wonders he had wrought, in order thus to prevent the objection which his enemies might have alleged, of his having foretold his death only upon his arrival in Judea, when he could not but perceive the marked antipathy of the Jews against his person. "But the Apostles understood not this word, and it was hid from them, so that they perceived it not." Their firm belief that he was the Messiah, and consequently immortal as they imagined, rendered his death, in their eyes, a mystery of the greatest obscurity, which they could not fathom; "and they were afraid to ask him concerning this word; and they were troubled exceedingly" at this declaration, which seemed to forebode something very unpleasant to their feelings, and unfortunate to their divine Master. "And when they were come to Capharnaum," which place Jesus now visited for the last time, and probably for the purpose of finally settling his affairs, "they that received the didrachmas" for the repairs of the temple, "came to Peter, and said to him: doth not your Master, pay the didrachma, or tribute money? he said: yes." This seems to imply, that the payment of this tribute was omitted or evaded by many. "And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying: what is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children, or of strangers? And he said, of strangers. Jesus said

* *Eis ta ota* in auribus; that is, let them sink into your ears. Mark these words diligently. *Gen.*

to him: then the children are free."

The argument here made use of by our divine Master is as follows: the money collected for the use of the temple, is properly speaking, a tribute which God imposes for the reparation of his own house, and which as such, is to be collected after the manner of other tributes. Now the kings of the earth exact no tribute from their own children or near connections, but only from their subjects and those that are not of their household. Therefore, in the present instance, God will not exact this tribute from his only Son, but will exempt him from it, together with his disciples. "But that we may not scandalize them," added Jesus, "go to the sea, and cast in a hook; and that fish which shall first come up, take; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that and give it to them for me and thee." This tribute was collected per head throughout Judea, for the repairs of the temple, and amounted for each person that was twenty years old, to a piece of silver of the weight of two drachmas, about fifteen pence English. A stater or shekel, was equivalent to two didrachmas, or four drachmas, and was the tribute to be paid for two persons, being about two shillings and sixpence English money.

We may learn from this example of Christ our Lord, to forego occasionally our strict rights, so far as to suffer some temporal loss, in order thereby to prevent or do away any ill founded scandal which weak persons might otherwise take, even from our most innocent actions.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE FIRST DISPUTE AMONG THE APOSTLES CONCERNING PRIMACY—SCANDAL TO BE AVOIDED.* MATT. XVIII. MARK IX. LUKE IX.

Whilst they were upon their road into Judea, an altercation took place among the Apostles, which afforded Jesus an opportunity of giving them, and all succeeding Christians, several important lessons, such as might regulate their conduct, both with regard to themselves and to their neighbours. 1. Contempt, in our own regard, we are to consider our just due, and are therefore to sit down in the lowest place. 2. With regard to our neighbour, our duty is to bear patiently with him if troublesome. 3. If he be weak in faith, to avoid giving him scandal. 4. If unjust, we must mildly reprove his conduct by fraternal correction. 5. If he acknowledge his fault, we are to forgive what is past. These different points are treated of in this and the following chapter.

No part of the foregoing prediction of Jesus concerning what was to befall him, seems to have struck the Apostles more forcibly than that of his future resurrection. This they failed not to interpret of his entering into the full possession of his temporal kingdom. "And" hence "there entered a thought into them which of them should be greater;" in this new

* See the second, in chap. 132.

and glorious state which they figured to themselves. Each one, it seems, aimed at the possession of the first dignities, and urged with earnestness the superiority of his respective claim. It is probable that some of them stated their being first called by Jesus, whilst others, such as James the Less, Simon and Jude, with great plausibility, might ground their claims upon their near connection in blood with their Master and future King. Some, it is likely, boasted of their having been intrusted by him with the most important secrets; these were James the Greater, and John, and the latter would not fail to allege in his own behalf the particular affection shown to him on all occasions by his Master. Lastly, Peter,* in whom most of the preceding claims also concentered equally with the rest, was peculiarly distinguished by that promise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which Jesus had made to him not long before. They were thus deeply engaged in conversation upon this topic amongst themselves: "But Jesus," though "seeing the thoughts of their hearts did not interrupt them until they reached Capharnaum, whither they were going. And when they were in the house, he asked them: what did you treat of in the way? But they" were ashamed at the recollection of what had passed, and "held their peace; for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest. And sitting down" as it were to decide their differences by his authority, "he called the twelve." Wherefore, "at that hour the disciples," who had been silent before, and were now compelled to speak, "came to Jesus," and interrogated him only in general, instead of enforcing each their personal pretensions, "saying: who thinkest thou is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? He saith to them: if any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all. And calling to him a little child," perhaps three or four years old, "he set him in the midst of them, by him, whom when he had embraced, he saith to them," proposing him as a model of humility to those who were disputing concerning the first rank in the kingdom: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" for it is destined only for those who resemble these little ones in innocence and humility. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is greater in the kingdom of heaven," because more conformable to me here on earth. In effect, these humble souls who are little in their own eyes, are so dear, and so closely united to me, that "whosoever shall receive one such child as this, in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. For he that is the lesser amongst you," by humility, "he is the greater" in my heavenly kingdom. "And John answering, said; Master," if thou receivest thus all whatever is done in thy name, we have been guilty of a fault: for "we saw a certain man casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us,

* Calmet supposes Peter not to have been with them on this occasion, but to have gone before them with his Master to Capharnaum.

and is not of the number of thy disciples. And Jesus" repressing his indiscreet zeal, "said to him: do not forbid him: for there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, and can soon speak ill of me;" on the contrary, he cannot fail to confess that power, by virtue of which he worketh miracles. Wherefore no longer oppose those who act in my name, although they are not with you. "For he that is not against you is for you;" and with greater reason, he who labours with you in destroying the power of the devil, is to be considered as favourable to you; and shall accordingly receive the reward of his labour, however small it may be. "For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." He leaves them therefore to infer, that this exorcist whom they had reprimanded, was rather to be rewarded, since by driving out the devils in the name of Jesus, he had promoted his honour and advanced his interest.

Jesus now proceeds to treat of the sin of scandal, which consists in giving occasion to another's sin, by bad example, evil advice, or any other means. In few words he shows the enormity of this sin, the almost unavoidable necessity of its being committed, considering the weakness and wickedness of the world; the eternal punishment due to it; and lastly, he points out proper remedies against it. "And whosoever," says he, describing the enormity of this crime, "shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me," either by evil example, advice, or encouragement, it were better for him that a mill-stone * were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should scandalize one of these little ones. Take heed," therefore, "to yourselves." So dreadful a menace most certainly calls for all our care and attention, lest by our words or actions we become a stumbling block to others, by drawing them into sin. "And he said to his disciples: wo to the world because of scandals. It is impossible," indeed, "that scandals should not come," so great is the corruption of the world and the frailty of those who live in it. Wherefore, "it must needs be that scandals come." As it is almost unavoidable for a person, how healthy soever he may be, to live in company with others infected with the plague, without receiving the infection, so is it equally dangerous to associate with the wicked; for they will almost inevitably, by their words or actions, communicate to others the malice of their heart. "But nevertheless," says Christ, "wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh:" and then he proceeds to describe the punishments he may expect in another life, in the following terms: "And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into unquenchable fire, where their worm," or remorse of conscience, "dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalize thee," by carrying thee into bad company, and to forbidden pleasures, "cut it off: it is better for thee to en-

* Grotius is of opinion, that the mill-stone about the neck alludes to a custom of drowning among the Syrians, and St. Jerome thinks it was likewise in use among the Jews. Among the Greeks this was the ancient punishment for *sacrilegious* persons, according to Diodorus Siculus.

ter lame into everlasting life, than having two feet to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. For every one of" them "shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt." In these last words he represents the damned as victims burning to the glory of God's justice, and as such they must be prepared with the same ceremonies as were all other victims. Now every victim the law commanded to be salted.* And thus, in a manner peculiar to their situation, the damned must likewise be salted, and it is this singular quality or property of hell-fire, which, by constantly renewing the substance it devours, constitutes the eternity of their punishment.

Jesus now offers to them a resource against this dreadful evil of scandal, and he finds it again in the nature of salt, which is an emblem of true wisdom, which should render them incorruptible in their morals, as that of hell renders the damned incorruptible in their torments. In this sense he declares, that "salt is good," because, as it rendered the victims agreeable to God, so true wisdom, represented by it, preserves our souls from the corruption of sin, and makes them pleasing in the divine sight: "but if the salt," says he, become unsavoury, wherewith will you season it?" As nothing will restore it, when corrupted, to its original efficacy, so if they, who by their calling are designed to counteract the natural tendency of mankind to corruption, become themselves equally corrupt, through a vain emulation for grandeur and preferment with what other salt can these be restored to their sound state? Wherefore "have salt in you" which is good; labour for that true wisdom of which it is the emblem; and "have peace among you," by means of this divine wisdom, and by avoiding carefully these empty disputes concerning preeminence, which can only serve to create mischief and dissension.

Finally, Christ suggests the remedy to be applied to this evil of scandal, both by those who have given it, and by others who have received it. To the latter he points out the necessity of breaking off all connections with those who give scandal, however near and dear they may be to us; for he declares we must part even with a hand, a foot, or one of our eyes, if they become to us an occasion of sin; it being infinitely more eligible to enter into eternal life blind or lame, than for the sake of these members to be cast into hell, into that dreadful fire which will never be extinguished.

As to the authors of scandal, the remedy for them is to entertain a great esteem and religious respect even for the least of those who believe in Jesus, for the ruin caused by scandals is owing to the little esteem and regard men have for souls, as if their eternal loss were not chargeable on those who occasion it by their bad example. Wherefore to inspire the respect for the souls of others, Christ says: "see that you despise not one of these

* Levit. ii. 13.

little ones. For I say to you, that their angels * in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." Jesus leaves us to infer, that since the angels are thus deeply interested in the preservation of the souls confided to their care, they will certainly not allow the authors of their damnation to go unpunished, but will loudly call for vengeance upon them at the tribunal of God.

A second reason for esteeming these souls is, that after their being lost by sin, Jesus came down purposely to seek them, and to withdraw them from their errors. "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." Since the object of his incarnation and death was the salvation of souls, how can it be supposed that he will not take vengeance on those who frustrate the fruits of his sufferings by causing the damnation of those for whom he died?

Jesus explains this infinite love which he bears to the souls of mankind, by the example of a shepherd. "What think you," says he, "if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains,* and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it happen that he find it; amen I say to you, he rejoiceth the more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray;" because in its regard he has a particular subject of joy which the others afford not, viz. that of having found it again when lost and gone astray. The application of this allegory is obvious. Jesus is the shepherd, who, leaving his flock behind him in heaven, that is, innumerable armies of angels,

* It is certain that every good man, in the state of grace, has a particular angel to watch over him, and solicit his well being. The most eminent among the Fathers affirm the same even with regard to sinners and infidels, which is strongly supported by the authority Scripture. To this purpose Abraham tells his servant travelling to Messopotamia: "the Lord will send his angel with thee and will direct thy way." Gen. xxiv. 40. The patriarch Jacob makes mention of his good angel, who had redeemed him from all evil, and prays the same protection to his children. "The angel that delivered me from all evils, bless these boys." Gen. xlviii. 16. Judith said: "his angel hath been my keeper, both going hence, and abiding there, and returning from thence," Judith xiii. 20. The Psalmist assures us, "he hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Psa. xc. 11. And in another place: "the angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him, and he shall deliver them." Psa. xxxiii. 8.

We may well admire the excess of God's goodness and wonderful condescension in thus commanding his highest spirits to watch over and guard us miserable sinners. "Who is he," says St. Bernard, ¶ "that hath given this charge? to whom and of whom, hath he given this order? and what is its import? Let us seriously consider and weigh every part of this mystery. Who is he that hath given this charge? The Lord of angels whom they obey. The Supreme Majesty of God hath laid a command upon the angels, and his own angels, those sublime, those happy spirits who approach so near his Divine Majesty, his own domestics: and it is the care of thee, that by this sacred command, he hath intrusted to them. What art thou? Is not man rottenness, corruption, and the food of worms? But what dost thou think he hath commanded them concerning thee? That they guard thee; that they keep thee in all their ways; nor do they loiter: they even bear thee up in their hands, as it were, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The same holy father observes, that we owe to our guardian angel great reverence, devotion, and confidence: "reverence" says he, "for his presence, devotion for his charity, and confidence in his watchfulness. Penetrated with awe, walk always with circumspection, remembering the presence of angels, to whom you are given in charge in all your ways. In every apartment, in every closet, in every corner, pay a respect to your angel. Dare you do before him what you durst not commit if I saw you." It is the duty of every Christian to recommend himself daily to the protection of his good angel. "Though we are weak," says the same holy father, "and our condition low, and though so long and dangerous a way lies before us, what can we fear under so great guardians? As often as any tribulation or violent temptation assails you; implore your guardian, your guide, your assistant in tribulation, and in all times of need." To deserve his protection, we must above all things avoid sin; for "as smoke chases away bees, and stench doves, so the odour of sin driveth away the angel, the keeper of life," says St. Basil, Hom. in Psa. xxxiii.

¶ Ser. 12. in Psa. xc. p. 862.

* In the Greek it is dubious whether the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine in the mountains, or whether he himself goeth into the mountains in quest of the lost sheep. The Syriac and Vulgate follow the former sense, which is confirmed by St. Luke, chap. xv. 4. when he speaks of *the ninety-nine being left* IN THE WILDERNESS. Others adopt the latter sense, as more agreeable to the Greek.

came down upon earth purposely to seek after one lost sheep, viz. our human nature, gone astray, and lost by the sin of our first parents; and it is from this redemption or reparation of mankind effected by himself at the dear price of his own sufferings and death, that he feels a greater degree of joy than from the faithful perseverance of the angels in heaven. "In like manner," says Christ, we may infer, that "it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish;" since, to effect their salvation, he sent down even his only Son into the world: and consequently he will not fail to take just vengeance upon all those who, by their bad example, contribute to frustrate his most gracious designs.

CHAPTER LXXI.

FRATERNAL CORRECTION—THE KEYS PROMISED—INJURIES TO BE FORGIVEN—WE ARE TO CONSIDER OURSELVES AS USELESS SERVANTS. MATT. XVIII. LUKE XVII.

AFTER having treated of the sin of the scandal as an offence which regards the spiritual goods of grace and salvation, the connection of Christ's discourse seemed to require, that he should next treat of injuries which we receive either in our reputation or in our corporal goods, whether such injuries originate from inconsiderateness, frailty, or malice. These are what he touches upon in the sequel.

After supposing the necessity of reparation on the part of the aggressor, Jesus establishes the obligation of forgiving the injury on the part of the person aggrieved, in the following terms. "Look well to yourselves: if thy brother sin against thee," go and "rebuke him; and if he do penance, forgive him the injury he has committed "And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day be converted unto thee, saying: I repent: forgive him." If, on the contrary. he repent not of his fault, but continue obstinate in his malice, he then stands in need of the correction of a third person, in order to extricate him from his criminal state. For we may observe that there are three degrees of correction, all of them equally proceeding from a spirit of charity and zeal for the offending party, and divested of all rancour and revenge; yet each of them distinguished by a different degree of severity. The first degree is mentioned above, which is that the injured party must speak to his aggressor privately, and remind him of the injury received. "Go," says Christ, "and rebuke him between thee and him alone." This first step is the most pacific and conciliating; for whilst it tends to the correction of the fault, it spares the confusion which a more public reprimand would cause to the aggressor, and thus affords no plea for his obstinately justifying a bad action, which perhaps the presence of others might urge him to do. "If he shall hear thee," and attend to this mild correction, "thou shalt gain thy

brother" to God, to thyself, and to himself, who would otherwise have been lost in all these several respects.

The second degree is, that "if he will not hear thee," through a spirit of rancour and obstinacy, thou give him a second correction: and in this case, "take with thee one or two more" persons of respectability, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand." These are not called in to prove his fault, which may perhaps have been a secret, or at least not known to them, in which case they could bear no testimony against him. Moreover, what need of the testimony of others, when the aggressor himself must be conscious of the injury which he has done? They are therefore appealed to, not as witnesses to prove the injury committed, but as friends to give a sanction to the plaintiff's cause by the weight of their authority, and to effect a reconciliation by their persuasive arguments; or otherwise, to bear witness in the face of the Church, that every thing has been done which charity required; and that if all this prove ineffectual, it now belongs to the Church to take up the cause.

The third degree of correction therefore becomes necessary, when the offender refuses to listen to you, or to the witnesses called in: for, "if he will not hear them," says Christ, "tell the Church," or that prelate who in your regard is the representative of the Church, and who by canonical admonitions, must urge him to give you due satisfaction. And if he will not hear the Church," speaking to him through the voice of its pastor, "let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican;" that is, as a person with whom, after such solemn denunciation, all religious communication and intimacy must cease; that so this mark of infamy may tend to heal this disordered sheep, or at least preserve the rest of the flock from the contagion of his example. But lest public and obstinate sinners might treat the sentence of their pastors with contempt, Jesus here most solemnly engages to ratify whatever they shall decree. "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth," either in the tribunal of penance, or in the outward court of ecclesiastical polity, "it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth," by sentence of absolution, "shall be loosed also in heaven." These two important branches of ecclesiastical power are justly to be considered as powerful means of bringing sinners to repentance; the former, by intimidating them under the dread of being for ever cut off from the body of Jesus Christ, on account of obstinacy, and the latter, by attracting them to their duty through a desire and well-grounded hope of being thus reinstated in grace, and of recovering their former rank in the Church.

What Christ adds, is a confirmation of the preceding promise. For to show more forcibly, that the sentences thus pronounced upon earth will be ratified in heaven, he assures them, that even exclusive of their judicial decisions in council, he will comply likewise with the vows and prayers of two or three individuals. "Again I say to you, that if two of you shall agree upon earth concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be

done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them;" and Peter was forcibly struck with what Jesus had decided concerning our treatment of an offending brother, which was to pardon him upon his repentance, though he should offend us seven times a day. A condescension of this extent appeared to him somewhat unreasonable, and beyond all bounds. "Then Peter came to him, and said: Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times;" which shows that we must forgive the offences of our brethren to an unlimited extent.

To point out more clearly the truth and equity of this decision, Jesus spoke to his disciples the following parable. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents," * that is, an immense sum: "and as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that," according to the custom of those times, he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But the man," convinced of the justice of the sentence, and knowing he had nothing to hope for but from the mercy and clemency of his lord, "falling down, besought him, saying: have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him" the trifling debt of "a hundred pence, and laying hold of him he throttled him, saying: pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying: have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their master all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt because thou besoughtest me, shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry delivered him to the torturer until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

The foregoing parable represents to us the severity with which God will scrutinize our conduct towards our neighbour. Divesting it of the metaphorical imagery of farmers, debtors, and sales, we may here consider a vindictive person under four various circumstances; 1, Under the weight of innumerable sins committed against Almighty God. 2. As having been gratuitously admitted to a reconciliation with his offended majesty. 3. As guilty of the blackest ingratitude.

* Which in English money, according to some authors, amount to one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds sterling; that is, seven hundred and forty thousand times as much as his fellow servant owed him. Whereas the hundred pence that his fellow-servant was indebted to him, was but three pounds two shillings and sixpence.

4. As suffering the just and rigorous chastisement of his crimes.

1. The Almighty in his high council of heaven, contemplates the various conduct of mankind as reported to him by the angels whom he has commissioned to watch over his creatures. On this report depends the lengthening or the shortening of man's days, as appears from the book of Job, and the 3d of Kings, chap. xxii. Wherefore, before this divine tribunal, a report is laid of a man overwhelmed with an enormous load of crimes, without any desire or endeavour to satisfy for the same; in conformity with the divine justice, he is in due course condemned to forfeit his life, both for time and eternity; his body, here represented as his wife, is to be delivered over to the worms, and all his works, which are considered as his children, are adjudged to the devil. He is then personally cited before God's tribunal, by the summons of a dangerous sickness, which in a few days reduces him to the last extremity.

2. Placed in so critical a situation upon the bed of sorrow, this man, now at the feet of his offended Judge, requests most earnestly, and with floods of tears, to be indulged with a respite, in order to do penance for his sins. He fails not to make the most solemn promises of amending his life, and of satisfying for his past crimes: his sorrow for these is so great, and his tears so abundant, that the Almighty is touched with compassion; he forgives him his sins, and prolongs his life.

3. This favoured criminal has scarcely recovered from his sickness, when, on meeting a person from whom he formerly received some injury or affront, all his former rancour returns; and without listening to the voice of reason or of gratitude, he gives vent to the utmost extent of his vengeance. All good people who witness this cruel and inhuman conduct, are shocked at it; the angels denounce it before the judgment seat of God; and the devils eagerly paint it with the highest colours of exaggeration.

4. The Almighty deservedly strikes the culprit by a sudden death, and brings him before his tribunal: "wicked servant," says he to him, "I had pardoned all thy transgressions, being moved by thy prayers and tears, oughtest not thou to have done the same to thy brother? especially as the injury thou hadst received at his hands was trifling: nay, even nothing when compared with the offences which thou hadst committed against me: in forgiving these I set thee an example which thou oughtest to have imitated in pardoning thy brother." To this deserved reproof he can make no reply, and God delivers him into the hands of his ministers, by them to be tormented until he shall completely satisfy the Divine justice, that is, for all eternity.

The followers of Jesus might perchance flatter themselves, that after so great an effort of virtue as that of pardoning injuries, nothing more would be required of them. Jesus however undeceives us in this respect, by an example drawn from our own conduct in the ordinary occurrences of life. "But which of you having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say to him when he is come from the field; immediately go, sit down to meat.*

* We have here added these words from St. Luke, not

And will not rather say to him: make ready my supper, and gird thyself, and serve me, whilst I eat and drink; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant for doing the things which he commanded him? I think not. So you also," when you have forgiven injuries from your hearts, and returned good for evil, which I may compare to tilling the soil and feeding the cattle, yet must you not expect that God will be satisfied with your conduct, if you omit other essential duties. No, you must follow the example of this servant, who, after having worked during the day, had yet to prepare and attend at his master's table; in like manner you must continue to do good works, which are as it were, a meat highly pleasing to God, who is your heavenly Master; and therefore "when you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say: we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which we ought to do." I say unprofitable servants, not in your own regard, but in respect of God, who stands not in need of your services, and who can easily have that performed by others which he is pleased to require at your hands.

CHAPTER LXXII.

JESUS CHRIST DEPARTS FROM GALILEE.* MATT. XIX. MARK X. JOHN VII.

JESUS delivered the discourse of the preceding chapter to his Apostles at Capharnaum, and probably in the house of Peter's mother-in-law. He had now constantly resided in Galilee, and had only shewn himself at Jerusalem during very short periods of time, viz. on his being summoned thither by the stated solemn festivals. His relations and family connections were displeased at his not showing himself more in Judea, where, according to their ideas, he would have gained more credit to himself, and reflected more honour upon them, than in a distant province. As therefore the feast of the Tents was now approaching, which was one of the three festivals when the Jews were obliged by the law to appear before the Lord at Jerusalem, they embraced that opportunity to press Jesus, by various reasons, to quit his obscure residence in Galilee and exchange it for Judea. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these words, the feast of the Jews called the Tabernacles was at hand. And his brethren," that is, his kindred, "said

with any certainty that this is their proper place, but because they unite very well with what goes before from St. Matthew. St. Luke mentions them in his 17th chapter, together with three other instructions of Christ, without seeming to observe any particular order. Wherefore, as we have already given the three first instructions, (first, viz. of scandal, in the preceding chapter; the second, concerning fraternal correction in this chapter 71: the third, on the efficacy of faith, chap. 68.) we thought it proper to place the fourth here, especially as the ten lepers, which immediately follows this in St. Luke, is given here likewise in chap. 73.

* St. Matthew and St. Mark at the conclusion of this chap. and likewise chap. 89. say that Jesus retired from Galilee, and went to the confines of Judea beyond the Jordan; but not immediately, for it appears from St. John that Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem for the feast of the Tents or Tabernacles, and that it was from thence he passed to the confines of Judea after the dedication of the altar of holocausts.

to him: pass from hence and go into Judea: that thy disciples also may see thy" wonderful "works which thou dost; for there is no man that doth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If" then "thou do these" wonderful "things, manifest thyself to the world, by doing them at Jerusalem, where the Jews assembled from all parts, will be witnesses of them, and will not fail to spread the report thereof throughout the whole world.

Under the cloak of these plausible reasons, they concealed the strong desire they had of raising their own names from obscurity by the fame of his miracles. "For" these "his brethren did not believe in him" in a proper manner, so as to relish his maxims of humility and modesty; and as they were not persuaded of his being the Son of God, they concluded that he was not insensible to the esteem of men. "Then Jesus said to them: My time is not yet come" for going to Jerusalem. For, in the present moment, it behoved Christ to absent himself from that city on account of the many enemies whom he had raised against himself by his preaching. Since in his doctrines he uniformly condemned the practices of the world, as leading to damnation, he was become the object of its hatred: and therefore it became necessary that he should take certain precautions respecting his journey to Jerusalem. "But your time," said Christ to his relations, "is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to this festival, but I go not up to this festival day" as yet: "because my time is not yet accomplished." These words afforded his relations sufficient reason to conclude, that his going thither would be attended with great danger to his person; and we may hence conjecture, that the Jews had formed some design against him, as soon as he should appear in Jerusalem. "When he had said these things, he himself staid" behind "in Galilee," for a few days, in order that thereby his entry into Jerusalem might not take place until about the midst of the festival, which lasted during eight days. "But after his brethren were gone up, then he also departed from Galilee, and went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret," that he might not provoke the malice of his enemies. Thus, we see that Christ was pleased to avoid persecution, not by interposing his power, but by withdrawing himself till God's appointed time was come; to teach us to wait for that time also which he shall ordain, and not rashly to expose ourselves to dangers.



Hill of Samaria.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

CHRIST HEALS TEN LEPERS. LUKE XVII.

"And it came to pass as he was going to Jerusalem, he went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town" on the borders of these two provinces "there met him ten men that were lepers." Of these nine were Jews and one a Samaritan, and notwithstanding their natural antipathy and difference as to points of religion, they were travelling together, being all afflicted with a similar grievous disorder, and all equally in search of relief. "Who" therefore seeing Jesus passing by, "stood afar off," out of respect, and lest they should communicate their contagious uncleanness to others. "And they lifted up their voice, saying," in a suppliant manner: "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us. Whom when he saw, he said: Go show yourselves to the priests;" for these were authorised by the law to judge of the leprosy, and to restore such as were cured to their former rank in society, after various expiations and sacrifices. Jesus by thus sending them to the priests previously to their being healed would try their faith and submission, "And it came to pass as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks; and this was a Samaritan." The other nine persons pursued their journey without returning to their benefactor. "And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? There is no one found to return and give thanks to God, but this stranger," of whom it was less to be expected than of the Jews, who were the children of Abraham and of the patriarchs.

In these few words he displays their ingratitude. 1. By stating the benefit received in an equal degree by all the ten lepers, who consequently ought to have showed an equal gratitude towards their common benefactor. 2. By remarking the different condition of their persons; for as these nine were Jews, they ought, as such, to have been more enlightened, more religious, and more sensible of the favours received from God than a Samaritan, who however surpassed them in these several qualities. "And" Jesus "said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole." These words were applied more to the healing of his soul, hitherto infected with the leprosy of schism and of sins, than to that of his body, which had been already healed.

In the person of this Samaritan we behold a model of gratitude worthy of our imitation. The moment he is delivered from his misfortune, he is

actuated by the most lively sense of the benefit conferred on him. In re-returning thanks to his benefactor, the Evangelist remarks, he also glorified God, whom he acknowledged to be the author of his cure. Gratitude is a pleasing virtue, and the characteristic of a good heart; and nothing can be more just and natural than a proper sense of our obligations to those who assist us in our wants, whether corporal or spiritual. But in testifying our acknowledgments to those who relieve us in our necessities, who comfort us in our afflictions, who counsel us in our doubts, who admonish us of our defects, we ought to raise our views higher, and remember the Father of light, from whom every good and perfect gift is derived. Men are but the instruments of divine munificence, the channels through which God's graces flow into our souls. When man confers on us a benefit, let us remember that it was God who inspired him with the thought, who gave him the will, and who furnished him with the means of relieving us. As God is our principal benefactor, to him our thanks are principally due: our gratitude ought to commence with him and terminate in him. This debt of gratitude with which we stand charged towards him, is in proportion to the number and greatness of the favours which we have received. Our existence was the first of these benefits, and ever since he has not ceased to load us with new favours, either immediately by himself, or indirectly by the means of others. In the order of nature, of fortune, and of grace, what is there which we have not received? *

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

But if gratitude be a general obligation incumbent upon all, it is particularly required of those who, by the divine goodness, have been delivered from the state of sin, and re-established in the state of grace; who of enemies of God, are become his friends, and who after being covered with the hideous leprosy of sin, have been happily cleansed from it by repentance. The remission of one sin is so great a favour, that we cannot sufficiently return thanks for it: the less we merit such a benefit, the more lively ought to be our sense of gratitude. By our crimes we had provoked the anger of the Lord. and in return he displayed in our favour his choicest mercies; to our greatest injuries he opposed the greatest benefits; his clemency surpassed our ingratitude. What title, what right had we to this unspeakable benefit of our reconciliation? Why have we been the fortunate objects of his mercy preferably to so many others who have been the objects of his severest justice? In reflecting on their deplorable lot, let us remember that it might have been our own. Where should we now have been, had God exercised upon us equally as upon them his just rigours? How many miserable souls are now weeping and lamenting in the torments of hell, for sins less heinous than those which we ourselves have committed? From that dreadful abyss we have been delivered by the divine goodness: the same hand which might have precipitated us down below, has raised us up, and instead of inflicting on us the punishment which we deserved has guided us into the secure path of repentance. From the prospect therefore of the

most alarming torments we have passed to the hope of the most exalted felicity. Such are the unspeakable obligations which we lie under to the divine goodness; and can we, in return for so many unmerited favours, refuse God the small offering of a grateful and affectionate heart?

PART V.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES. JOHN VII.

THE feast of the Tabernacles or Tents, which was one of the three great annual festivals, was celebrated upon the fifteenth day of the seventh month Tizri, that is, at the full moon of the said month, in commemoration of the Israelites sojourning in the wilderness, and living in tents for the space of forty years. Our Saviour assisted at this festival, and remained in Judea or its vicinity the six following months, until the ensuing Passover, when he was to suffer death; and he seems not to have returned any more into Galilee until after his resurrection.

The various miraculous cures which he peformed upon diseased persons on the sabbath day, particularly that of the paralytic at the fish pond, which happened eighteen months before; his conversing with publicans and sinners; and other supposed crimes of a similar nature, had alienated from him the minds of the principal persons in Jerusalem, who had a greater degree of pride and stiffness than the Galileans. "The Jews, therefore," of this description, sought him on the festival day, and said, where is he? And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning him. For some said; He is a good man. And others said, No: but he seduceth the people. Yet no man spoke openly of him" to defend his cause, for fear of the Jews." By his not appearing in public, he allowed this first ferment to subside. "Now about the midst of the feast," which lasted eight days, "Jesus went into the temple, and taught: and" he did this in so masterly a manner, that "the Jews wondered, saying: how doth this man know letters," that is, the holy scriptures, "having never learned" them? The priests thus ex-

pressed their astonishment at his having acquired so profound a knowledge in the scriptures, and the mysteries contained in them, since they had never witnessed him amongst the number of their disciples. They were decidedly of opinion, that he could not have stored up so great a fund of learning by his own private study and application, much less by any other school but their own, since in no other part of Judea was the scriptural science publicly taught. Jesus, although he might not have heard what they said amongst themselves upon this subject, yet gave a sufficient answer to their objection. 1. By establishing the truth of his doctrines. 2. By justifying the miracle which he had wrought at the pond. 3. By proving that the several tokens or marks by which the Messiah was to be distinguished, concentred in his person.

The truth of his doctrine he established upon the strength of the three following reasons. 1. The authority of his heavenly Father. 2. The personal experience and conviction of his hearers, to which he appealed. His own disinterestedness. Wherefere, on this occasion, "Jesus answered them and said: My doctrine is not mine," that is, the invention of my own fancy, "but his that sent me. If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;" for he shall find in it so much light and equity, he shall taste so much comfort and sweetness in his soul, that he shall no longer entertain the least doubt as to God's being the sole author of it: "He that speaketh of himself," and uttereth his own devices without being sent by God, "seeketh his own glory," and is to be esteemed an impostor: "but he that seeketh" only "the glory of him that sent him, he is true; and there is no injustice" or deceit in him." He now proceeds to justify the miraculous cures which he had wrought on the sabbath, especially that which he had performed at the fish pond: and which had so irritated the Scribes and Pharisees, that they formed the design of putting him to death as a violator of the law. Upon this subject he brings an unanswerable argument in his favour from their own individual conduct. "Did not Moses," said he to them, "give you the law" of the sabbath? "and yet none of you keepeth" the letter of "the law;" for you make no scruple of giving circumcision on the sabbath day, and of healing the person who has received it. "Why seek you" then "to kill me," because I have healed a man on the sabbath day? "The multitude," far from entertaining so bad a design against Jesus, were hurt at this reproach; to which they "answered and said: thou hast a devil" that suggests such a thought, "who seeketh to kill thee? Jesus answered and said to them" one work I have done" on the sabbath, "and you all wonder" at it to this day, as if I had been guilty of a crime. "Moses gave you circumcision, (not that it is of Moses but of the fathers) and on the sabbath-day you circumcise a man," in obedience to this law. "If" therefore, "a man receive circumcision on the sabbath-day," and they labour to heal the wound inflicted by this rite, yet "so that the law of Moses be not bro-

ken, are you angry at me because I have healed the whole man on the sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance" and according to your prejudices, "but" with equity and candour "give a just judgment." Nothing could be alleged in reply to the preceding argument, and consequently all remained silent. "Some therefore of Jerusalem," well aware of the rancorous disposition of the principal Jews against the person of Jesus, "said: Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? And behold he speaketh openly" in the temple itself, "and they say nothing to him: are our chief men convinced indeed that he is the Christ? But" others, who pretended to a more profound knowledge of the law, declared that he could not be the Messiah. "We know this man," said they, "whence he is; but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." He will appear on a sudden before the eyes of mankind, as if he had dropped from the heavens, and in so secret a manner, that no one shall know either his parents or his family connections. Now the parents of this person who gives himself for the Messiah we know perfectly well, and therefore we may conclude that he has not the proper mark of his being what he pretends. This their false supposition probably arose from a mistaken interpretation of certain texts which alluded to the divine origin of the Messiah, such as that of Isaiah, chapter liii. Who shall declare his generation; and that of Micheas, chapter v. His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity. "Jesus therefore," knowing what they said of him, and judging the objection to be of some consequence, "cried out in the temple teaching and saying:" What, "you both know me," you say, "and you know whence I am? and" yet "I am not come of myself," nor do I derive my origin from that person whom you suppose my father: "but he that sent me is true," just, and faithful, "whom you know not," otherwise you might naturally conclude that the person sent by him is so likewise. "I know him because I am from him," being born of him from all eternity, "and he hath sent me" to you, to accomplish the promises made to your fathers. Hence he left them to infer, that even according to the principles which they themselves had established, he had that distinguishing mark of the Messiah which consisted in being descended from an unknown origin. The Pharisees were still more irritated at these words, and "they sought therefore to apprehend him; and no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. But of the people * many believed in him, and said: When the Christ cometh, shall he do more miracles than these which this man doth?" why then should we refuse to acknowledge him as the Messiah? "The Pharisees heard the people muttering these things concerning them: and the rulers and Pharisees," fearful lest their example should be followed by others, "sent ministers to apprehend him. Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while I am with you: and then I go to him that sent me. You shall

* We may observe how very differently our Lord's doctrine was received according to the different dispositions of those that heard him, viz. according to the good or bad ground where the seed was sown.

seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither you cannot come. The Jews therefore said among themselves: Whither will he go that we shall not find him? will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What is the meaning of what he said: You shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am you cannot come. And on the last and great day of the festival, Jesus stood" in the midst of the temple, "and cried out, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink," that is, let him come to me with a sincere faith, and he shall not fail to drink so as to have all his desires and longings after truth completely satisfied. "He that believeth in me, as the scripture saith,* rivers of living water shall flow from out of him," and shall thus be imparted to others. In other words, he shall pour forth torrents of the words of salvation, which shall be diffused in copious streams over the minds of his hearers, so as to produce in them a similar faith and a similar attachment to the truth. "Now this he said of the" holy "Spirit which they should receive who believed in him: for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" by his ascension into heaven. "Of this multitude therefore, when they had heard these words of his, some said: this is the prophet indeed. Others said this is the Christ; but some said: Doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the scripture say: that Christ cometh out of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem where David was born. So there arose a dissension among the people because of him; and some of them would have apprehended him; but no man laid hands on him. The ministers therefore," who had been sent to arrest him, "came to the Chief Priests and the Pharisees. And they said to them: why have you not brought him? The ministers answered: Never did man speak like this man," with so much grace, strength, and authority. "The Pharisees, therefore, answered them: are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees?" which they said, thus contrasting the example of persons both grave and learned in the law with the ignorant people. "But this multitude," said they, "that knoweth not the law, are accursed," and utterly incompetent to judge in a case of such nicety. "Nicodemus, (he that came to Jesus by night,) who was one of them," not a little nettled at this reproach of ignorance, "said to them: Doth our law judge any man, unless it first hear him and know what he doth?" He thus with great force of argument, and with perfect safety to himself, defended the cause of Jesus, by alleging in his favour merely the claims of natural equity, such as an accused person has a right to expect even from his inveterate enemies, and much more from his judges. They however refused to listen to so fair a plea, but answered and said: "art thou also a Galilean? Search the scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not."* The meeting after this was shortly broken up, "and every man returned to his own house."

* Joel ii. 28. Ezek. xxxvi. 15. Isa. lii.

* They probably allude to the great prophet, promised

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE ADULTERESS IS SUFFERED TO GO UNCONDEMNED. JOHN VIII.

"AND Jesus going out of the temple, went unto mount Olivet," so called from the olives wherewith it abounded, and there passed the night with his disciples. As this place was at the distance of about a mile and a half from Jerusalem, and consequently not farther off than it was lawful to travel on the Sabbath-day, he chose it for his ordinary place of resort, and it was there that Judas betrayed him. And early in the morning * he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him, and sitting down he taught them" the way of salvation. Whilst thus employed he was interrupted by a criminal suit that was brought before him: and such was his admirable decision on the occasion, that the accusers, though supported by the law, were yet confounded by truth itself, whilst the guilty party, though condemned by law, was nevertheless set at liberty by her own accusers. "And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery," who had probably been cited by her injured husband before their tribunal; "and they set her in the midst" of the assembly: "and said to him, Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us to stone such a one: but what sayest thou? And this they said tempting him, that they might accuse him." For if he condemned this woman to death, they flattered themselves that he would forfeit that popularity which his mild and humane conduct had hitherto gained him; if, on the contrary, he should absolve her from the guilt as well as the punishment of her crime, which was what they wished and expected from his known mild and compassionate character, in this case they would have the fairest handle to convict him of a violation of the law of Moses, and this violation would ever afterwards serve as an unanswerable argument against those persons who supported his cause. On this account, an adulteress woman was more suitable to their purpose than the man who debauched her, because his conduct being more odious, they might have been apprehensive lest Jesus should leave him to all the severity of the law. "But Jesus, bowing himself down," as it were declining to decide in so odious a cause, "wrote with his finger upon the ground" certain characters, the purport of which is unknown.*

to their forefathers, or they show their own ignorance of the Scriptures: for Jonas was certainly from Galilee, being a native of Geth-Opher, in the tribe of Zabulon, 4 Kings xiv. 25.

* What a pattern is this to his ministers! He thought the very night too long.

* St. Ambrose, Ep. 29, sect. 13, is of opinion, that he wrote these words, or at least to the same effect: "why

"When therefore they continued asking him, he raised himself up, and said to them," with a circumspection which showed he was aware of their malicious designs; "he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again stooping down he wrote on the ground," as it were to give them an opportunity of retiring and of thus avoiding the confusion they deserved.* This wonderful sentence pronounced by Jesus, whilst it preserved to the law of Moses its due authority, formed a happy union of the most impartial justice with the most unbounded mercy; it found out the means of saving this guilty woman in the very crimes of her accusers; it overwhelmed them with shame, whilst, in the main, it was a decision in their favour: and lastly, whilst it allowed them to inflict the punishment appointed for adultery, it yet tied up their hands from inflicting it, since, in case of her suffering death, they who deserved a similar punishment, were certainly excluded from being her executioners. "But they hearing this" unexpected answer, and fearing lest Jesus might now proceed to give such further detail of their own sinful lives as might fill them with confusion, "went out one by one, beginning at the eldest," whose vicious habits in this respect would have met with the least indulgence at the tribunal of the public: "and Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst" of the people, her accusers being gone out. "Jesus then raising himself up, said to her: woman, where are they that accused thee? hath no one condemned thee? (i. e. judiciously). Who replied: no one, Lord. And Jesus said: neither will I condemn thee."* Thus he forgave her the punishment she had deserved: but to show that in pardoning her guilt, he meant not to give a sanction to her crime, he added, "go, and now sin no more." By this example, our blessed Saviour teaches us to look into ourselves, and to examine our own conduct, rather than censure that of our neighbour. With respect to others, men oftentimes have a horror of those gross sins that strike their senses, and take no notice of their own internal sins, which are perhaps more heinous in the eyes of a pure Spirit. Instead of harshly condemning the faults of others, let us humble our souls before God, by whose mercy we have hitherto been preserved from falling into sins still more enormous; which, considering the instability of our hearts, we know not how soon it may be our misfortune to commit. If we expect to be treated with lenity in our misfortunes, we should not forget to show that lenity to others. Lenity is one of the most effectual methods to make the delinquent sensible of his fault. The lenity that Jesus Christ showed on this occasion, had, without doubt, a more salutary

seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye; but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not."

* This passage of the woman taken in adultery is not found in the greater part of our present Greek copies, nor in the commentaries of St. Chrysostom or St. Cyril; but St. Jerome, l. 2, contra Pelag. says it was found in many both Latin and Greek copies. And St. Ambrose, Ep. 82, speaks of it as having always been famous in the Church. St. Augustin expounds it, trac. 33. in St. John, lib. 2. de Adulterinis Conjugiis,-chap. 7. and severely condemns those (as modicæ fidei) who had taken offence at this history. It is cited by St. Gregory (lib. l. Mor. c. 10,) and received as genuine by the Catholic Church.

* It is believed that the crime of this woman was extenuated by some peculiar circumstances well known to our Saviour; and moreover he was not come *now to judge*, but to save sinners.



The Woman taken in Adultery.

effect upon the adulteress's mind, than all the severity of the Mosaic law. It is the spirit of lenity and charity which the Church, in imitation of her Spouse, has adopted with regard to her children. She turns her back upon none, however grievous their sins may be, she beholds them with the eye of a tender mother, she invites them to their christian duties; she stands with open arms to receive the penitent, and absolves them from their guilt, the moment she is assured of the sincerity of their repentance.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

JESUS PREACHES AGAIN IN THE TEMPLE, AND JUSTIFIES HIS DOCTRINE AGAINST THE PHARISEES. JOHN VIII.

THE scene just recited had interrupted the discourse which Jesus was making to the people: he now, therefore resumed it. Herein we may remark: 1. The testimony which he bore concerning his own person: 2. The terrible menaces with which he threatened the Jews: 3. The reproaches which he made to them as the degenerate descendants of Abraham: 4. The answers which he gave to their blasphemies. "Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying: I am the light of the world," by my doctrine and the example of my life, in order to conduct those souls to life, who before were involved in darkness: "he" therefore "that followeth me," by believing my words, and by imitating my actions, "walketh not in" the "darkness" of error and vice, "but shall have the light of life;" that is, he shall be truly enlightened, and safely conducted to a life of eternal happiness, by means of that life of true justice which now causes him truly to live in the eyes of God. "The Pharisees therefore said to him: thou givest testimony of thyself: thy testimony is not true," and ought not to be admitted as such. In answer to this plausible objection, Jesus gives them to understand, that after so many proofs of his divinity, by the wonderful miracles which he had wrought, the testimony he bears in his own behalf, is perfectly admissible; because the maxim, that a man is a suspected witness in his own case is out of the question in his regard, since he as God was incapable of deceit. "Jesus" therefore "answered and said to them: although I give testimony of myself, my testimony is true: for I know whence I came," and that my origin is from God, by an eternal generation, "and whither I go," viz. that I am, after the termination of this my mission, to return again to the bosom of God, to sit at his right hand, to enjoy his glory, and to draw thither all such persons as shall be obedient to him: "but you know not whence I come, or whither I go," the light of your senses not reaching to such sublime mysteries; and hence you receive not my testimony. "You judge" of

me "according to the flesh," and merely by outward appearances; "I judge not any man" in this manner. "And if I judge" of myself, "my judgment is true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me;" it is he who authorizes, by his testimony, that which I bear of myself: "and in your law it is written, that the testimony of two men is true.* And" since "I am one that give testimony of myself, and the Father that sent me giveth testimony of me" likewise, therefore our testimony is true according to the law, and you are obliged to admit it as such. If, in the present instance, Jesus were merely a common man, these two witnesses could be considered in no other light than as one; and on that supposition, the argument here adduced would be inconclusive, since in the testimony which he bears to himself, he who gives evidence, and who is the object of that evidence, would be precisely one and the same person; which would render the testimony of no avail by that rule which Jesus himself had acknowledged. But there being in Jesus two natures perfectly distinct, he here as God gives testimony to himself as man, viz. that he is in this quality the visible light of the world, without indicating thereby a diversity of persons. Thus, perhaps, there is no text in the Scripture which more clearly refutes the two heresies of Eutiches and of Nestorius than this before us. The first of these, which confounded the two natures, is hereby shown to be false, because he who bears testimony must, in some respect, be different from him to whom he bears testimony. The second, viz. the heresy of Nestorius, which asserted that in Jesus there was a multiplicity of persons, is refuted by Jesus's bearing testimony to himself, so that he who bears the testimony, and he who receives it, are one and the same person.

The Jews feigned a desire of seeing his Father, under the pretext, that being already acquainted with one of the witnesses, viz. himself, they now required only to see the other witness, in order to have a full and entire conviction. "They said therefore to him: where is thy Father" that we may receive his testimony? "Jesus," well aware of their duplicity, "answered: neither me do you know nor my Father; if you did know me" to be his Son, proceeding from him by an eternal generation, "perhaps you would know my Father also. These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, teaching in the temple," and surrounded by a great multitude of his enemies; "and" yet "no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come," when he was to be delivered into their custody. "Jesus then" finding that his instructions were little attended to, proceeded to utter terrible menaces against the Jews, and he "again said to them: I go" from you (alluding to his approaching death, of which they were to be the authors and perpetrators), "and you shall seek me" without being able to find me, "and" thus "you shall die in your sins,"* For "whither I go you cannot come," viz. to the eternal mansions above. "The Jews

* Deut. xvii. 6.

* This terrible threat of Christ against the impenitent Jews, should make all sinners tremble, who, like them, harden their hearts, and resist God's gracious calls and inspirations.



The Daughter of Jairus

therefore said: will he kill himself, because he said: whither I go you cannot come;" hereby implying that they would be loth to follow him in so rash an action. "And he said to them: you are from beneath," and have no other ideas or inclinations but such as are earthly: "I am from above: you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you, that you shall die in your sins. For if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins," since you can only be delivered from them by a true faith in me. "They said therefore to him," on hearing this menace: "who art thou? Jesus said to them:" I am "the beginning," the cause, and author of all things, who am now become man, and who also speak unto you: and this is what I said at the beginning, that you are to believe in me in order to be delivered from your sins. "Many things I have to speak and to judge of you, but" I shall at present content myself with saying: "he that sent me is true" and just in his judgments: "and" that "the things I have heard of him, these same I speak in the world;" so that in resisting my words, you resist truth itself. "And they understood not that he called God his Father. Jesus therefore," coming to the question they had proposed to him, viz. who he was, "said to them, when you shall have lifted up the Son of man" on the cross, and he shall be risen again, "then shall you know that I am he, and that I do" and say "nothing of myself; but as the Father hath taught, these things I speak. And he that sent me is with me, and he hath not left me alone: for I do always the things that please him." Hence he plainly showed that their ideas of him were erroneous, since they represented him to their imagination as an enemy of God, and as a possessed person, who spoke and acted under the immediate impulse and direction of the devil. "When he spake these things many believed in him. And" then Jesus to encourage them to persevere in this faith, "said to those Jews who believed in him: if you continue" firm "in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth" more and more, in proportion as you shall act conformably to its injunctions; "and the truth," thus revealed to you "shall make you free." They amongst his hearers who yet remained incredulous, were particularly offended at these last words of Jesus, which implied that they were in a state of slavery, and "they answered him: we are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man: how sayest thou, you shall be free?" They here appear to have forgotten that their ancestors, who were equally of the race of Abraham, had long been slaves in Egypt and Assyria. "Jesus answered them," and confirmed what he had insinuated as to their slavery: "Amen, amen I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin is a slave to sin;" as therefore you fall into sins of various kinds, according to your depraved inclinations, hence it follows that you are slaves to your respective sinful habits. "Now he that is a slave, abideth not in the house" of his master "for ever;" for he is either driven from it, as was Agar with her son, or is transferred over to other masters;

(insinuating hereby, that they would one day be driven from the kingdom of God;) "but the Son" of the family "abideth for ever" under his paternal roof. "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed;" not by enjoying a mere civil liberty which you boast of, but a liberty of the soul, which consists not in serving either concupiscence, which reigns in you, or the devil, who adds fuel to it, but in serving God alone, your heavenly Father, who will render you for ever happy in the mansions of eternal bliss. "I know," as well as you, "that you are the children of Abraham; but" I know likewise that you are the slaves of sin, since "you seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." In announcing to you the truth, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and you," in being desirous of putting me to death, "do the things that you have seen with your father. They answered" in a fierce and peremptory manner, "and said to him: Abraham is our father. Jesus saith to them: if you be the children of Abraham, do ye the works of Abraham;" imitate his faith and holy life. "But now you seek to kill a man who hath spoken the truth to you, which I have heard from God: this Abraham did not," and therefore you are by no means the true children of Abraham. "You do the works of your father," who is of a very different description from Abraham. They now understood that Jesus spoke not of a filiation according to the flesh, but rather of a spiritual generation, such as showed itself by a similarity of manners; and as the crime of idolatry is in the language of Scripture a spiritual adultery, which the unfaithful soul is guilty of against God her lawful Spouse, they declared in few words, that they were not the fruit of a sacreligious union of this description, and had not been trained up to idolatry either by the words or by the example of their fathers. "They said therefore to him: we are not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus therefore said to them: if God were your Father, you would indeed love me; for from God I proceeded and came; for I came not of myself, but he sent me. Why do you not know my speech," it being only natural that one brother should know another by his accent and tone of voice, as well as by his features? The reason is, "because you cannot hear my word" with patience, on account of your hatred of me, though I speak truly the word of God. Therefore "you are of your father the devil," both in mind and in the resemblance of your actions; "and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning," by drawing our first parents into sin, and so occasioning their death and that of all their posterity; and you are so, in my regard, by seeking to take away my life: "and" moreover, "he stood not in the truth." This is manifest, because since his fall truth is not in him, but totally discarded from his mind. "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But" you are his children; for "if I say the truth" to you, "you believe me not," and only conceive a horror for my sacred doctrines. But "which of you shall convince me of sin," or of any falsehood?

"If," therefore, "I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me?" Is it not because you are the children of the devil, and as such hate the truth that is announced to you? "He that is" the child "of God, heareth the words of God," not only with his corporal ears, but with those of his heart, considering them as the food and sustenance of his spiritual life. "Therefore you hear them not, because you are not" the children of God. "The Jews therefore," touched to the quick by these reproaches, "answered and said to him: do not we say well, that thou art a Samaritan," that is, an enemy of God's people, "and hast a devil" that inspires thee with these sentiments? "Jesus answered," with great mildness: "I have not a devil: but I honour my Father," by referring all the glory of my actions to him as to their principal cause and author: "and you have dishonoured me," and have made my work the subject of derision and animosity against me. "But I seek not my own glory: there is one to seek it and judge" all your shameful outrages.

Having thus replied to the several objections which they had urged against him, Jesus resumes his discourse in favour of those who should remain steadfast in his doctrine, and having already promised them true, spiritual liberty, he adds what they may further expect from such fidelity in his service. "Amen, amen I say to you: if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever;" that is, the death of the soul, but shall escape that eternal misery prepared for the incredulous. "The Jews therefore," understanding it of the death of the body, "said: now we know that thou hast a" familiar "devil," which causes thee to hold out so delusive a promise. "Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest: if any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets" too "are" long since "dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: if I glorify myself" as man, "my glory is nothing," and you would have reason to reject it. But "it is my Father that glorifieth me," by communicating to me his power, "of whom you say that he is your God. And" yet "have not known him; but I know him; and if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you a liar; but I do know him, and do keep his word," and observe his commandments with the greatest punctuality. As to what you ask me, whether I am greater than Abraham, I shall only say, that "Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day," and the day of my coming upon earth, as likewise the day of my glory, when I shall sit as judge of the living and the dead; "and he saw it* and was glad. The Jews there-

* In a prophetic spirit Abraham beheld the day of Jesus Christ. His lively faith merited for him the honour of becoming the father of him in whom all nations were to be blessed. (Gen. xxii. 18.) This distant anticipated view was alone sufficient to fill the holy patriarch with joy. With regard to us Christians, it is not at some future and distant period of time that we see this happy day; Jesus is come: we have seen the glory of the only begotten Son; we enjoy the presence of this great Sun of justice; he continues to shine upon us. Are we duly sensible of the inestimable advantage in being thus enlightened by him; in having been born, not in past ages, when Jesus was not known, nor in countries where his religion has not been preached? God has placed us in the bosom of his holy Catholic Church; he has instructed us in the great truths of religion; let us be thankful for such a privilege, and let us testify our gratitude in the manner which is most agreeable to him, that is, by profiting as we ought, of such unspeakable benefits.

fore said to him: thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am," for as God I existed from all eternity. "They took up stones therefore to cast at him; but Jesus," before they could execute their cruel design, "hid himself" in the crowd, "and went out of the temple," thus to escape their fury. In all probability he went, according to custom, to pass the night on mount Olivet. While we admire the great meekness and forbearance which Jesus evinced on this occasion, we may learn from the conduct of the Jews, the danger of abandoning ourselves to passion and prejudice. Nothing is more difficult than to carry conviction to a prejudiced mind. If a person labouring under this misfortune, act from conscience, he does not see his error if he be not sincere, he desires not to see it. He either believes himself to be in the way of truth, or he has no inclination to walk in that way; and what first led him astray, still withholds him from the right path. But if his prevention and error regard religious objects, they become stronger, and are the more irremediable, as being frequently the just punishment of an angry God. Penal blindness is the effect of voluntary blindness. When man repeatedly shuts his eyes to the lights of God, he is, in return, abandoned by God, and becomes the victim of his own folly; God permits that his eyes should be no longer open to those heavenly truths which he impiously rejected. This, no doubt, is the true cause of that astonishing blindness and obstinacy observable in the enemies of our holy religion; they have the greatest authority in the world to direct them, viz. the visible authority of the Universal Church, besides other motives of credibility; and yet with pertinacity they refuse to believe in revelation, or to submit to the decisions of the Catholic Church. In vain we seek for the principle of their error in the weakness or capriciousness of the human mind; with greater probability we may refer it to the just judgment of God. The truth is, that for the sake of worldly interest or sensual gratification, they fondly cherish their errors; hence, by the justice of God, they are abandoned to them.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO A MAN BORN BLIND. JOHN IX.

"AND Jesus passing by" the next day, gave a fresh proof of his divine power, by curing a man who had been blind from his very birth. In performing this miracle, he employed such means, as in the common course of nature, ought rather to have caused than removed blindness. The doctors of the law and the Pharisees, instead of being enlightened, were still more blinded by this miracle. The blind man, after recovering his sight, was



Pool of Siloam.

able to confound, though not to cure their strange blindness. Wherefore Jesus returning to the city the day following, "saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" This question, according to St. Cyril and Origen, may possibly have originated from the absurd opinion taught by some of the Pharisees, that the souls of virtuous persons, on their decease, pass into other bodies, and appear again in the world by a second birth, and under a new name; in this sense the above question implied that this blind man might, previous to his birth, have been guilty of some actual sin, whilst his soul animated a body distinct from that which now appeared before them in a state of blindness. With regard to the parents of the blind man, the question here addressed to Jesus, was grounded upon that text of Exodus (xx. 5.) which describes the Almighty as revenging the sins of parents upon their children to the third and fourth generation. It is to be remarked, that original sin was here entirely out of the question, though in fact all our evils originate from it. "Jesus answered: neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works" and power "of God should be made manifest in him." For "I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night" of death "cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," and therefore it behoves me to give light to this blind man as a lively representation that I give spiritual light to the souls of men blinded by sin. "When he had said these words, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him: go wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted, sent. He went therefore, and washed, and he came seeing. The neighbours therefore, and they who had seen him before, being a beggar, said; is not this he that sat and begged? Some said: this is he. But others said: no, but he is like him. But he said: I am he. They said therefore to him: how were thy eyes opened? He answered," with great candour and simplicity, for as yet he did not know his benefactor to be God: "that man who is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me; go to the pool of Siloe and wash: and I went, I washed, and I see. And they said to him where is he? He saith: I know not. They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the Sabbath, when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees asked him: how he had received his sight. But he said to them: he put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see." It is somewhat pleasant to observe the emotions caused by this palpable miracle in the minds of the Pharisees who now were at a loss to find a plausible pretext for condemning it. They were divided into a variety of opinions on the subject. Some therefore of the Pharisees said: this man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath. But others said: how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? *

* This shows that reason alone is not a sufficient guide.

They say therefore to the blind man again," feigning to refer the decision to him: "what sayest thou of him that hath opened thy eyes?" They flattered themselves that his answer might afford them some grounds for invalidating the truth of the miracle, if he did not express a due esteem for his miraculous cure, or if, overawed by the great number of the enemies of Jesus in the council before which he stood, he should not dare to make an express declaration in his favour. "He," however, "replied," without fear or hesitation: "he is a prophet. The Jews then," suspecting a collusion between them, "did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that now saw, and asked them, saying: is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said: we know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But how he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. Ask himself, he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be" excommunicated and "put out of the synagogue;* therefore did his parents say: he is of age, ask him," After the evidence thus given by the parents of the man, the council had sufficient reason to be satisfied as to the certainty of the fact; they however gave not the point up without a further investigation. "They therefore called the man again that had been blind, and said to him: give glory to God," who is here present, and in whose sight thou speakest. But they waited not for his answer, and suggested to him that he ought now to avow his having obtained his eye-sight by some other means, and to confess to the world that Jesus had prevailed upon him, by unlawful means, to declare him the author of the cure. "We know," said they, "that this man is a sinner," and consequently he cannot have performed a miraculous cure. The man, who saw not the depth of their malicious artifice, only confirmed what he had before asserted: "he said therefore to them: if he be a sinner I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;" and therefore am bound, by every tie of gratitude, to give glory to God, by thus openly confessing the truth.

As this honest bluntness of the man disconcerted all their schemes, they had recourse to another expedient. They began to cross-examine him, hoping thereby to lead him into some contra-

Here are two sorts of people, both endued with reason, who make two very different inferences. But so it will ever be, while men have different interests and passions. How much these blind the understanding, while they impel the will, we have a striking instance here in the Jews.

* The general opinion is, that among the Jews there were three kinds of excommunication; that the first was called *niddui*, that is, *separation*, which lasted for thirty days, and separated the person from all things holy; the second was called *sherem* or *execration*, which excluded the person from the synagogue, and deprived him of all civil commerce; and the third, *shammatha*, or *excision*, which removed him from all hopes of returning to the synagogue any more. But Selden maintains, that these three terms, *niddui*, *cherem*, and *shammath*, are sometimes synonymous, and that the Jews, properly speaking, never had more than two sorts of excommunication, the *greater* and the *less*, though most are agreed that it was the greater sort of excommunication which the sanhedrim threatened to any one that should confess Jesus to be the Christ, because the parents of the blind man were so fearful of it, that they durst not speak out.—*Calmet.*

diction, and of course to invalidate his testimony. "They said therefore to him: What did he to thee? how did he open thy eyes? He answered them: I have told you already, and you have heard * why would you hear it again?" Thus instead of giving them a direct answer to their question, lest they should twist his words to a wrong sense, he reproached them for their want of understanding, and of attention to what he had so plainly related. He even went so far as to turn them to ridicule. "Will you also," said he to them, "become his disciples," that you are so desirous of having a repetition of what you have already heard? Nothing in nature could have been more cutting to the proud and haughty Pharisees, than the very shadow of such a suspicion. "They reviled him therefore, and said: be thou his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses;† but as to this man, we know not whence he is," nor who sent him, nor from whence he derives his doctrines, or that authority which he arrogates to himself in teaching. "The man answered," with a wonderful presence of mind, "and said to them: why herein is a wonderful thing, that you," with all your learning, "know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God does not hear sinners," so as to grant them this power of working miracles in confirmation of error; but if a man be a worshipper of God and perform his will, him he heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, he could not do any thing" of this wonderful nature. As no satisfactory answer could be found to this reasoning, "they answered" it with abusive language, "and said: thou wast wholly born in sin," as appears by the blindness in which thou wast born, and dost thou teach us? And they" instantly "cast him out," thinking thus to have given a sufficient answer to his argument. "Jesus heard that they had" thus "cast him out of the synagogue, and when he had found him, he said: dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered and said: who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him: thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said: I believe, Lord; and falling down he adored him" with that sort of adoration which is due to God alone. "And Jesus said," with a happy allusion to his late blindness, and to that clear light which he now enjoyed: "I am come unto judgment into this world, that they who see not, may see; and they who see, may become blind;" in other words, that humble and simple persons, such as honestly avow their ignorance, may become enlightened by the light of the true faith, whilst they who flatter themselves with the idea of being the

* Gr. And ye did not hear.

† It is true, the Jews had a rule (Deut. xiii. 1.) not to receive a prophet who should lead them to idolatry, or from the God who brought them out of Egypt, though he should work miracles. But then Jesus Christ asserted the honour of the God of Israel, pleaded for his law in the true sense of it, wrought miracles greater than Moses, &c. That rule therefore did not concern Jesus Christ. They should have known likewise that Moses had said, Deut. xviii. 15. that God would raise up a prophet like unto himself, and that they should hear and obey him. They knew that there had been no such prophet since Moses, until Christ came among them, doing greater signs and wonders than even Moses himself had done.

most enlightened and above instruction, become blind by their own darkness. "And some of the Pharisees who were with him, heard" these words, and rightly judging that they were levelled at them, "they said unto him; are we also blind? Jesus said to them: if you were blind," and sufficiently humble to acknowledge your ignorance, you would not be liable to sin,"* because you would then seek the truth with sincerity, and the truth would not fail to enlighten you: "but now that you say, we see," and boast of your knowledge and wisdom, "your sin remaineth," because this presumption hinders you from seeking after the light which is necessary for you; falsely imagining that you have no need of it. Thrice happy, say the holy Fathers, was the man who through his corporal blindness discovered the true light which enlightens every man who cometh into this world. He became not the adorer only, but also the defender of Jesus Christ against his enemies; unshaken by their threats, he boldly declared the truth, and silenced their captious arguments against it. The Jews cast him out of their synagogue; but Jesus received him into his communion, and made his heart the living temple of the Holy Ghost. We see by this instance, that wicked men, according to the just judgment of God, are hardened by those very things which are sufficient to convince the humble and sincere. We see likewise that an unlearned man, who has truth on his side, is able sometimes to baffle the most learned opponents: for by the foolishness of men, God is pleased to confound the wisdom of the wise.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

CHRIST DECLARES HIMSELF TO BE THE TRUE SHEPHERD. JOHN X

In the following discourse Jesus pointed out the several essential differences between a thief and a true shepherd, and then showed his just claim to the character of the latter.

The first difference is in the manner of election to the office of guarding the sheep. "Amen, amen I say to you; he that entereth not by the door," that is by a canonical election or promotion, "into the sheepfold, but climbeth up by another way," by a window, or through a breach in the wall, viz. by means of injustice, or fraudulent and simoniacal practices, such as favour or partiality, or by making presents, all which are manifest infringements of the established rules, "the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door" of a regular appointment, "is the shepherd of the sheep."

The second difference is, that "to him the porter openeth," viz. the Holy Ghost opens the door to the true shepherd, and allows him access into the sheepfold, as being called thereto by God, who holds the door

* Si vos cæcos adverteretis, si vos cæcos diceretis, ad medicum curreretis. Aug. Tract. 44, in Joan.

open to him in all his enterprises, and facilitates the execution of them by his divine assistance. He leaves it to be inferred, that neither God, nor a call from God, opens the door to the thief and the robber: the thief enters in only by fraud and imposition, and the robber enters in by high birth, riches, or influence.

The third difference is, that the true shepherd is known by his sheep, "and the sheep hear his voice," which they readily distinguish from all other voices; because a soul enlightened from above, and imbued with a relish for the truth, easily knows its pastor by the conformity of his doctrine with that which she has already received. He thus hints to the Pharisees, that they must not wonder if many of the Jews, after the example of the blind man, should refuse to listen to them as to their masters, and should rather attach themselves to him, and become hearers of his word: the reason of which preference is, that they distinguish his voice, and are attracted by the truth, which they find not in the discourses of the Pharisees.

The fourth difference is, that the true shepherd knows, "and calleth his own sheep by name," to see, as it were, that none be wanting. He applies himself to the wants of all in general, and of each in particular, evincing an equal care of all. It is far otherwise with the thief, who, as the sheep know him not, so likewise he knows not them, cares not for their wants, nor diseases, and so thinks not of applying the remedies suited to them; in short, he allows them to perish, and is indifferent to their loss.

The fifth difference is, that the true shepherd "leadeth them out" into wholesome pastures; that is, nourishes them with sound and orthodox doctrines, and causes them to drink of the pure waters of truth: whilst, on the contrary, the thief leads the sheep to be butchered, or if he leads them to the pasture, he pays no attention whether they feed upon poisonous herbs, or quench their thirst with infected waters.

The sixth difference is, that the true shepherd "when he hath led out his own sheep, goeth before them" as their guide. He is the first to comply with all God's commandments or counsels, thus proposing himself as a pattern for their imitation; nor does he point out any thing to be done by them, but what he is the first to perform himself. "And the sheep" therefore "follow him, because they know his voice," which is the voice of truth. "But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers," which is ever the voice of error and deceit. "This proverb Jesus spoke to them," in order to show that he was the true Pastor of God's sheep, the Guide and Conductor of his people; "but they understood not what he spoke to them." He now condescends to make the application of it, both with regard to himself and to the false teachers who had gone before him; classing among the latter all such false prophets as had introduced themselves into the office of conducting the people of God. In this number he includes the Pharisees of the present time, who, although the lawful successors of Moses, had now become false shepherds, by refusing to acknowledge that Messiah whom Moses had

foretold. "Jesus therefore said to them again," and with the solemn asseveration of an oath: "Amen, amen I say to you, I am the door of the sheep," by which men may enter into the sheepfold of the Church, by faith in my name. I am likewise the door of all true shepherds, because all such are invested with my authority, either by an extraordinary and immediate mission, as my apostles, or by a regular mission derived from them, such as will descend to all their lawful successors to the end of the world. But "all others, as many as have come" without a legal mission and authority, "are thieves and robbers, and the sheep hear them not. I am the door" of salvation: "by me if any one enter in" to the Church, either as one of the sheep by faith, or as a shepherd by a lawful vocation, "he shall be saved, and he shall go in and out, and shall find pastures" of wholesome food. "The thief cometh for no other end but to steal, to kill, and to destroy, by the poison of false doctrines. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" now under the gospel than under the law.

Jesus then proceeded to apply to his own person the several peculiar marks of the good shepherd contained in this parable, pointing out the two characteristics which in a particular manner distinguish him from the hireling. "I am the good shepherd," * says he. "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep," if necessary to defend them against wolves, that is, against false teachers, who preach up heresy and schism. But the hireling," or mercenary pastor, "and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf catcheth aud scattereth the sheep. And the hireling flieth because he is a hireling; and he hath no care for the sheep;" but feeds them with a view only to his own profit, without any principle of affection towards his master, or any desire or zeal for the good of the flock. "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and as this mutual knowledge produces in us an infinite love, so this affectionate knowledge which I have for my sheep, inspires me with so great a love for them, that "I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have," distinct from

* It must be observed, that in ancient times men of the greatest quality and substance made it their business to look after their flocks, not thinking such an employment below them. Hence probably came the frequent metaphor of styling kings the shepherds of their people. Wherefore the ancient prophets very properly describe the Messiah in the character of a shepherd, and our Saviour here applies the same character to himself, thereby to represent his government of the Church, and tender concern for mankind; *he shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom; shall seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away: shall bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was weak, and gently lead them that are with young.* Isa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 16. These are all lively emblems of our Lord's pastoral care, and of the various methods employed by him, to promote our eternal salvation. And as the character of *shepherd* is well suited to our gracious Saviour, so there is something in the nature and disposition of *sheep*, something so innocent and inoffensive, so peaceable and gentle, so patient and submissive, so honest and undesigning, as carries a near resemblance to that simplicity and probity, that modesty and humility, that quietness and submission which are the characteristic qualities of Christ's disciples. It is likewise to be observed that the shepherd's art in managing his sheep was different in the Eastern countries from that which prevails among us. Hence we read of his *going before*, *leading*, and *calling his sheep*, and of their *following*, and *knowing* his voice, whereas our shepherds *go after* and *drive* their sheep before them. In a moral sense, these several expressions denote that Christ receives into the number of his disciples all those humble and obedient souls that come to him in the spirit of meekness, and not only in the clothing, but with the real qualities of his sheep.

this little flock in Judea, and scattered amongst the Gentiles; "them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" calling them to the true faith; "and there shall be one fold and one shepherd," for the Jewish people and the Gentile world shall coalesce together, and form but one common church. "Therefore doth the Father love me; because I lay down my life" for the sheep; and this I do only for a short time, "that I may take it up again" by a glorious resurrection. And I lay it down freely and of my own accord: for "no man taketh it away from me" by force; "but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." Thus am I equally free both in suffering death and in rising again to life; and "this commandment," or commission, "have I received of my Father. A dissension rose again among the Jews by reason of these words, and many of them said: he hath a devil and is mad, why do you hear him? Others said: these are not the words of one that hath a devil. Can the devil open the eyes of the blind?"

We may here remark the difference which Jesus Christ points out between the several descriptions of spiritual guides. Some of these are wolves, whilst others are thieves and robbers; a third sort are hirelings, and a fourth are the true shepherds of souls. The wolves and the robbers, it seems, pursue a similar line of conduct; for they both hate and destroy the sheep. The hirelings, instead of loving the flock, love only themselves. It is the good shepherds who alone truly love their flock, and bestow on it, after the example of Christ, the whole of their care and attention.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

CHRIST SENDS THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES TO WORK MIRACLES AND TO PREACH.* MATT. XI. LUKE X.

IT was but reasonable that the faith should be preached to Judea, as well as to Galilee, and therefore, "after these things, the Lord appointed also other seventy-two:* and he sent them two and two," that one might be a help and comfort to the other, and their testimony of greater force. They were sent "before him," in order to prepare the way, "into every city and place" of Judea, "whither he himself was to come;" each division having a determinate district allotted it. In the recital of this transaction,

* Most Greek copies, and the Syriac version, have seventy, but the Latin interpreter has seventy-two, because he knew by tradition that this was the true number. It was usual with the Hebrews to put a round number, e. g. seventy, when it was well known the real number was seventy-two. Hence they are called the seventy interpreters, though it be certain that the exact number was seventy-two.

The seventy-two disciples whom Christ sent before him, were inferior to the twelve apostles, and are the prototypes of those inferior ministers in the Church, who, with due subordination to their episcopal superiors, have their share in the work of the holy ministry according to the rank and and power which is given them.

* It cannot be ascertained at what precise time this mission took place. It is, however, probable, that between the feasts of the Tents and the Dedication, Jesus remained in Judea, and that in this interval he sent the seventy-two disciples to sow the seeds of the gospel in those places of Judea, and its vicinity, where he had not yet preached

we are to remark, 1. The instructions he gave to these missionaries. 2. The good success of their labours. 3. The thanks which Jesus gave to his Father for their success.

Before their departure, he addressed to them a discourse, wherein he first points out the proper disposition of mind which they ought to possess, with regard to their future employment, viz. that they should be animated with a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, and should consequently beseech the master or lord of the harvest to provide labourers for so great a work. "And he said to them" the harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest. Go; behold I send you as lambs among wolves," that is, unarmed, defenceless, and unprepared to resist the numerous enemies you will have to encounter.

He then gives them various instructions proper for their intended mission, and which are nearly similar to those which he before gave to his Apostles. "Carry," says he, "neither purse" for money, "nor scrip" for superfluous clothing, "nor shoes," besides those on your feet, "and salute no man by the way;" because your mission is not an affair of worldly business, and therefore nothing temporal should stop you from announcing the kingdom of God. "Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: peace be to this house; and if a son of peace be there," that is, a person well disposed and worthy of peace and benediction, "your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you," to be given to some more worthy person. "And make your abode in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they have: for the labourer is worthy his hire," and your subsistence is the least thing you can receive from those to whom you announce the gospel. "Remove not from house to house," lest you deservedly incur the imputation of a blameable delicacy, and of an impatient temper. "And into whatsoever city you shall enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you," without making any further demands. "And" in return for such hospitality, "heal the sick that are therein, and say to them," by way of consolation; the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," for faith is the foundation of salvation. "But into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you not, going forth into the streets thereof, say: even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us, we wipe off against you," to show that we will have no communication with you. "Yet know this, that the kingdom of God is at hand," and his truth is announced to you, and therefore you cannot allege the plea of ignorance in extenuation of your guilt. "I say to you, it shall be more tolerable at that day," when God shall render to every one according to his works, "for Sodom, than for that city.* Wo unto thee Corozain, wo unto thee Bethsaida; for if the miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been wrought in you, they had long since done penance in sackcloth and ashes.

* This ought to be a warning to Christians, who will receive the severest punishment, if they improve not by the instructions of Christ's ministers.

But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou Capharnaum, exalted even to heaven," by thy pride and ambition, "shalt be plunged even into hell," because it is God himself thou hast rejected, in rejecting those whom he has sent to thee. For "he that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." This is an aggravation of guilt not laid to the charge either of Sodom or Gomorrah. "And the seventy-two disciples," after the term of their mission was expired, "returned with joy" at the happy success of their labours, "saying: Lord, the devils also are subject to us," when we speak to them "in thy name. And he said to them: I saw," at the beginning of the world, "Satan, like lightning, falling from heaven," in punishment of his vain complacency in the gifts with which God had enriched him. Be therefore on your guard; "behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions," whereby are represented the devil and his agents, "and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But yet" be not vain of this advantage, and rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven," and in the book of life. "In the same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said: I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them" to the humble and "to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight." These expressions sufficiently pointed out to his disciples, that they ought not to attribute to their own merits the new power with which they had been invested. But this justice, by which the proud are left in their blindness, and this mercy, by which the humble are enlightened to salvation, are equally to be ascribed to the Son as well as to the Father. Hence Christ adds: "All things are delivered to me by my Father," the great as well as the little, the wise as well as the unwise; "and no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son shall reveal him. And turning to his disciples, he said," congratulating with them for the happiness which they enjoyed "blessed are your eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things you hear, and have not heard them." Then he addressed the following sweet invitation to those who stood round him, and in general to mankind: "Come to me all you that labour" under the miseries of this life, "and are burdened" with the weight of your sins, and of your passions, "and I will refresh you." For this purpose, "take up my yoke upon you," which consists in the love of God and in the love of the cross; and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and" thus only "you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light" to

them who love me; and they who fervently practise my law, shall find therein a hidden manna superior to all earthly gratifications.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN. LUKE X.

In the two questions which are the subject of this chapter, Jesus first teaches us, that the love of God and our neighbour is a necessary condition for the attaining of eternal life; and secondly, that our neighbours are all mankind who enjoy one common nature with ourselves. "And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him and saying: what shall I do to possess eternal life? But he said to them: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.* And he said to him: Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live eternally. "But he willing to justify himself," as if he had a sincere desire of being instructed in the precepts of the law, in order to observe them, "said to Jesus: And who is my neighbour?" This was, at that time, a subject of great controversy among the Jews, because that law which merely said: thou shalt love thy friend as thyself,† had afforded a plea to the Pharisees for superadding as a necessary consequence: therefore it is lawful to hate an enemy. Hence it remained to be determined by Jesus what was the import of the word neighbour, and whether it equally comprised relations and others that were not so, strangers equally with our countrymen, our enemies as well as our friends. "And Jesus answering" the lawyer, related to him a parable, which from its being so circumstantial both as to places and persons, has greatly the appearance of a real historic fact. In confirmation of this it may be observed, that the road which leads from Jerusalem to Jericho, was much infested by robbers, and that there was in particular a certain valley named Adomin, noted for the frequent murders committed there upon passengers. "A certain man," said Jesus, "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," about seven leagues distant, "and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by." Thus these two ministers of the temple carried their inhumanity so far as to turn their back upon a person of their own country, of their own city and religion, even when languishing under the greatest distress. "But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came

* Deut. vi. 5.
† Lev. xix. 18.

near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion," and dismounting from his horse, "and going up to him," he immediately began to afford him every assistance in his power; "he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." For, according to the custom of these times, a traveller carried with him such articles of food as these for the convenience of his journey, and this mixture of wine and oil was an application highly proper for the poor man's wounds, in order both to cleanse them from all corruption, or the clotted blood, by the acidity of the wine, and likewise to foment and soften them by the healing sweetness of the oil. "And setting him upon his own beast," in the best manner he was able, "he brought him to an inn and took care of him," by procuring for him, at his own cost, every proper medical assistance. "And" to leave nothing short, he extended his charity to the providing even for his future wants; for being obliged to pursue his journey, "the next day" when he departed,* "he took out two pieces,† and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee." After this recital Jesus addressing the lawyer, asked him: "Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbour to him that fell among robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner." That is, learn from the example of this Samaritan, who in the person of a Jew assisted a stranger, a declared enemy of his religion, but in a state of extreme distress, learn, I say, not to limit the quality of neighbour to your own kindred, connections, friends, country, or even religion, but to consider as your neighbour all mankind, of whatever country or religion, when in a state of present or impending want and distress.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

JESUS COMMENDS MARY'S ATTENTION TO HIS DOCTRINE IN PREFERENCE TO MARTHA'S BUSY CARE TO ENTERTAIN HIM. LUKE X.

"Now it came to pass as they went" towards Jerusalem, "that he entered into a certain town" called Bethania, which is only about two miles from that city, "and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a younger "sister called Mary." Upon this occasion, Jesus gave a decision of no small importance concerning the respective merit of an active and of a contemplative life, here represented by these two sisters. Whilst Martha was extremely busy in preparing all things necessary for the reception of her distinguished visitor and his holy com-

* *Apelthon.*

† Twopence. The *denarion*, which we render a penny, was a kind of Roman coin, much about sevenpence of our money. In the New Testament, (for it never occurs in the Old) it is usually put for a piece of money in general, that is, for a shekel, which was the most common coin among the Jews before they became subject to the Greeks and Romans: so that in this sense, what the Samaritan gave the host amounted to about five shillings, which is more consistent with the rest of his character, than that he should leave only so small a sum.

pany, which probably consisted of his twelve Apostles, Jesus in order to profit of this interval of time, began, as usual, to discourse with them concerning the kingdom of God. To listen to his heavenly doctrine was the chief delight not only of them but of Mary, "who sitting" therefore "at the Lord's feet, heard his words" with the most religious attention. "And Martha was busy about much serving," and considered it as a hardship to be thus left alone. "Who" therefore "stood, and said," sweetly complaining: "Lord, hast thou no concern that my sister has left me alone to serve? Speak to her therefore, that she" rise up and "help me. And the Lord," though well pleased with the affectionate solicitude of Martha, yet acting here the part of a disinterested judge, became the advocate of Mary, and "answering said to her" sister: "Martha, Martha, thou art solicitous and art troubled about many things," and in preparing many superfluous dishes; one is sufficient: and in reality "but one thing is necessary," and that is to love and serve God and to labour for eternity. "Mary," in keeping herself near to me, in order to nourish her soul with my heavenly doctrine, "hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken from her;" for pious contemplation is the noviciate of heaven, where it shall for ever continue the sweet and uninterrupted occupation of the blessed. We must not however infer, that it is lawful to abandon the functions of active life, or neglect the duties of our state, in order to give ourselves up entirely to prayer and contemplation. The most perfect life is that which unites action and contemplation together; such was the life of Jesus Christ and of his Apostles, and such is the life of ecclesiastics employed in the sacred ministry, whose state therefore is more perfect and meritorious than that of religious, who live abstracted from the world in the constant exercises of prayer and contemplation. In like manner every good christian, with respect to that state of life in which Providence has placed him, must endeavour to combine action with contemplation, that while the necessary duties of his station are not neglected, he may find time to raise up his soul to God, and unite himself to him by prayer and meditation. We must ever reflect, that the salvation of our souls is the one thing necessary, and whatever draws our attention from this necessary business, should be either carefully avoided, or made subordinate to it. By a pure intention, we must sanctify the exterior actions of our calling; we must join the two sisters together: the activity of Martha and the prayer of Mary should be our alternate exercise. Thus we shall always keep the essential point in view; thus only shall we happily succeed in that one, that important, and that necessary affair for which we were created.



Martha and Mary.

CHAPTER LXXXII

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY. LUKE XI.

"AND it came to pass, that as Jesus was in a certain place praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples," who had refrained through respect from interrupting him, "said to him: Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Jesus had already delivered to his hearers a form of prayer, in his sermon upon the mountain, but he here repeats it in behalf of several of his disciples, who probably had not been then present, and according to the original Greek text, he repeats it nearly in the same terms, and precisely in the same number of petitions; but in the vulgate the third petition is wanting, which regards the accomplishment of God's will, as likewise the seventh, by which we pray to be delivered from all evil: the purport of these however is comprised in the preceding petitions. It is difficult to say by what accident this variation has taken place betwixt the Greek text and the Latin vulgate.*

At the request of the above mentioned disciple, Jesus pointed out to his followers, 1. The things which in general we must ask of Almighty God. 2. The essential condition of perseverance to render prayer efficacious. 3. The nature of our particular request. "And he said to them: when you pray, say: Father," who art in heaven: "hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come;" thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: "give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us: and lead us not into temptation," but deliver us from evil.

What we pray for may be classed under two general heads, viz. the glory of God and the necessities of mankind; we begin with the former of these as justly claiming the first place, and in the first three petitions express our ardent wishes for whatever may promote the glory of the kingdom of God, and the accomplishment of his divine will. In the remaining petitions we pray for our own wants, for the forgiveness of sins, for the avoiding of dangers, and the deliverance from all evils, whether temporal or eternal. Wherefore by the first petition we are taught to ask of God the sanctification of his holy name throughout the whole world, viz. that all mankind may know and adore him as the author of their being and of their happiness, and may live in such manner as to show, by the regularity of their good conduct, that the God whom they adore is infinitely holy.

By the second petition, we ask for the kingdom of God, viz. for the forwarding or hastening of that eternal kingdom in which God will reign over his creatures; over his saints in glory, over the reprobate by his justice, and over all creatures by reducing them to a state of eternal permanency.

* See St. Augustin, who takes notice of this difference, Enchyr. c. 1.

By the third petition, we beg that the will of God, as signified to us in his commandments, in his counsels, and dispensations, may be exactly fulfilled by us here upon earth, as it is by the angels in heaven.

By the fourth, we ask for the relief of all our wants both of body and soul, that is, we beg for the food necessary for the support of our corporal life, and particularly for the word of God, the grace of the Holy Ghost, and above all, for the sacred food of Christ's body in the holy Eucharist, in order to nourish the life of our souls.

By the fifth petition, we ask for the remission of the debts which we owe to God, that as we, for his sake, forgive the debts of others against us, and banish from our minds all resentment of the wrongs we suffer, so we beseech God to cancel the stains of sin in our souls, and mercifully to forget the offences which we may have committed against him.

By the sixth, we ask not indeed for a total exemption from temptation, which is often necessary for us, to try us, to make us know ourselves, to purify us, and to humble our pride; but we beseech God not to suffer us to yield to temptation, either by a deliberate consent of our will, or by an outward commission of the sinful act.

By the seventh petition, we ask to be freed from all those evils which afflict us, whether temporal or spiritual, whether arising from the temptations of the devil, the alluring baits of concupiscence, or from the consequences of that human frailty to which, of ourselves, we are ever subject.

After thus prescribing the form of prayer, and of several things to be asked for in prayer, Jesus proceeds to point out the necessary condition for rendering it efficacious. This is perseverance, the necessity and efficacy of which he shows by a parable or apposite comparison. "And he said to them: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him, friend, lend me three loaves: because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut," and cannot be opened at so unseasonable an hour, "and my children are" asleep "with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

Our divine Saviour now proceeds to make the application as follows: God is infinitely more liberal and merciful than mankind; "and" and therefore "I say to you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh" with humility, "receiveth; and he that seeketh" with fervour, "findeth; and to him that knocketh" with perseverance, "it shall be opened."

As to our particular requests, Jesus points out the nature of them indirectly, by specifying such things as he never grants to his children, as well as other things which he never refuses to them. What they ask for must neither be useless nor indifferent, as

stones, nor dangerous, as serpents, nor fatal to their lives, as scorpions. All these things are instanced as improper subjects of our prayers. The things to be asked for ought, on the contrary, to be either necessary to us, as bread, useful, as fish, or wholesome and serviceable to us, as eggs; all which several articles are granted accordingly. "And which of you," said he, "if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone, or if a fish, will he, instead of a fish, give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion. If then you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good spirit to them that ask him." Hence it appears, that this holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is that one thing truly advantageous, wholesome, and necessary, which it behoves all Christians to ask incessantly of Almighty God,* because he brings him all other gifts.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

JESUS PRONOUNCES SEVERAL WOES AGAINST THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES † MATT. XXIII. LUKE XI.

"AND" on a certain day, "as he was speaking, a certain Pharisee prayed him that he would dine with him." Several of the same sect, and also of the Scribes, were in like manner invited. Being desirous of a favourable opportunity of announcing to them several truths which he did not judge proper to be spoken in public, Jesus readily accepted the invitation, "and going in, sat down to eat" without observing the previous ceremony of washing his hands. "And the Pharisee" marvelled, and "began to say, thinking within himself, why he was not washed before dinner" Jesus who read his thoughts, began a discourse, which he directed both to the Scribes and Pharisees. In the first part of it he condemns, in vehement language, the principal vices of the Pharisees, viz. their hypocrisy, their false devotion, their boundless ambition, their insatiable avarice, their false zeal, their ignorance in deciding upon cases of conscience; and lastly he resumes

* St. Luke after this subjoins the history of the demoniac that was dumb; perhaps, because on this occasion many things were said concerning doctrine, which he proceeds to relate in the following chapters. See c. 49.

† This invitation of the Pharisee is subjoined by St. Luke, to the dispute which was occasioned by the expulsion of a devil, mentioned in chap. 49, but not in such a manner as to indicate any order or connection between the one and the other. For St. Luke does not say, as St. Augustin observes *whilst he was speaking* THESE THINGS, but *whilst he was speaking*, to signify only that on a certain occasion, when Jesus was instructing the people, a Pharisee invited him to dinner. Wherefore the time and place of this transaction are uncertain. What is related here by St. Luke, as having been said by our Saviour to the Pharisees in the time of dinner, occurs in the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, but as having been said at another time and place: so that Christ must either have repeated these things at different times, or St. Matthew, according to custom, must have added them to other words of our Saviour, which though spoken on another occasion, had some connection with the same subject. For what St. Luke relates, as giving occasion to these reproaches of the Scribes and Pharisees, and what he adds in the end, that *when he said these things the Pharisees began to dispute* earnestly, &c. sufficiently show that he relates the matter in its proper place. For this reason, we have here annexed the woes which are to be found in St Matthew, because they serve mutually to illustrate each other, but it was found necessary to change the order of some verses in the last Evangelist, in order that they might harmonize better with the text of St. Luke.

again the subject of their hypocrisy, but considered in a different point of view.

First, he begins by stating their usual practice of washing repeatedly, during their meals, the cups and platters when brought to them, under the apprehension lest these might, by the hands of some unclean attendants, have contracted a legal uncleanness, which would be communicated to them; and thence he takes occasion, in a pleasant manner, to compare them to these very utensils. For mankind are, as it were, the cups and dishes in which religious worship is offered up to the Almighty. The body is the outside, the inside is the soul; and, as dishes contain in the inside, which is concave, such meats as are served up to table, so likewise it is the interior part of man, to wit, his heart and soul, which contain those spiritual meats which religion presents to the Almighty. Jesus therefore reproaches the Pharisees for their scrupulous care in cleansing the outside of their cups and dishes, viz. their body, by frequent washings, and for affecting, in the eyes of the world, a great appearance of sanctity, whilst they were careless as to the inside, that is, the bottom of their heart and conscience, which they left in a most filthy state, and highly unworthy of being presented to God. "And the Lord said, now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity:" yes, "inwardly you are full of extortion," excess,* "and uncleanness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make also that which is within? Thou blind Pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside" also "may become clean;" and the more so, because God who created both, considers the soul as his greatest work, and her acts of religion as the most acceptable part of the worship offered to him. For as the impurity of the body defiles the soul, so also does the purity of the soul communicate itself to the body, to render it truly pure and undefiled. "But of what you have give alms," in proportion to your substance: "and behold all things are clean to you." Christ here prescribes the means whereby they may cleanse their souls from the stain of sin, which is, after making restitution of their ill-acquired goods, to give alms according to their abilities. By their doing this, all things will become clean to them, and they shall be cleansed both within and without, that is, in their body and in their soul, so as to offer an acceptable worship to the Almighty. Not that alms are of themselves sufficient to effect this purity in the wicked, such as the Pharisees were; but they obtain of God, through the prayers of the poor, that true faith and repentance by which the soul is purified from her guilt.

The second vice which Jesus condemns in the Pharisees, and for which he threatens them with everlasting wo, is their false devotion, which vitiated even their most religious practices. On the one hand, they were foolishly scrupulous in trifles, whilst on the other they followed the most relaxed casuistry in matters of the greatest importance. "But wo to you Phari-

* Gr. *excess.*

sees," said Christ, "because you tithe mint and rue, and anise, and cumin, and every herb, and have left the weightier things of the law," wherein its very spirit and soul consists. These are "judgment," or that strict justice which each one owes to his neighbour, "and mercy," or that assistance which is due to him, and which is afforded him by good counsel, and by real and effective helps when in our power, "and faith," or honesty in our dealings with him, and fidelity in our promises; "and" lastly, "the charity" or love "of God," for whose sake we must perform all our actions, which likewise comprises faith, or a belief in his words, and a firm hope in his promises. "Now these things," said Jesus, "you ought to have done," as being the very foundation on which all religion is built, and without which it cannot subsist, "and," at the same time, "not to leave undone the other less considerable duties. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat,* and swallow a camel;" for whilst you are scrupulously attached to the most unimportant works of supererogation, you violate without difficulty, the most essential precepts of God's law.

Thirdly, he reproaches them for their ambition, in vainly contesting for the first rank, and in eagerly grasping at the empty satisfaction of being respectfully addressed in public places. "Wo to you Pharisees, because you love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place."

Fourthly, he reproaches them for their avaricious conduct towards widows. "Wo to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers; for this you shall receive the greater judgment." It being usual, from the most remote antiquity, to pray in the synagogues for the souls of the deceased, as appears from the second book of Machab. xii., hence widows failed not to recommend their departed husbands to the prayers of the Pharisees, who, on that account, exacted such exorbitant sums, that the circumstances of these poor persons were thereby greatly impaired. This was a species of inhumanity of the blackest hue, it being aggravated by the affliction and desolation of the parties thus oppressed. Moreover, the long prayers used by the Pharisees on these occasions, were no other than a specious pretext to satisfy their avarice, by taking advantage of the piety and the weakness of these women, who having now the entire disposal of their own goods, not unfrequently reduced themselves to indigence, in order to enrich these trafficking ministers of the sanctuary. In this their hypocrisy was notorious, and Jesus declares that their condemnation shall be the more severe, because they have abused so holy a thing as prayer, and have changed a charitable institution into a pecuniary contract.

Fifthly, he rebukes their false zeal and fruitless labours for the propagation of the Jewish religion. "Wo to you," says he, "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you compass sea and land to make one proselyte,"*

* Our Lord alludes to a custom the Jews had of straining all the liquor they drank for fear of flies, which they accounted unclean.

* A proselyte. Perhaps this is meant of the proselytes

that is, to induce a Pagan to become a Jew, "and when he is become one, you make him the child of hell doubly more than yourselves;" because ye are so far from giving the true meaning and design of religion, and leading him to true piety, that ye corrupt, by false notions, his natural notions of good and evil, and persuade him that the greatest crimes are expiated by more external purifications. This their zeal was in itself laudable, nor is it here blamed: but they are reproached because the conversions wrought by them had no other effect than to render the persons converted more wicked than before, or, as it is mere strongly expressed, more deserving of hell-fire than the Pharisees themselves, even in the proportion of two to one. Jesus does not explain the manner by which these proselytes were rendered worse than the Pharisees their masters; but it would appear, that upon their conversion to the Jewish faith, they did not change their manners with their creed, but being scandalized by the hypocrisy and bad example of their instructors, or disgusted at the heavy yoke of the law, joined with the human traditions of the Pharisees, relapsed again into idolatry, and thus added apostacy to all the other crimes of the Pharisees. Thus Estius, Major, Dyonisius, &c.

Sixthly, he taxes them with a consummate ignorance in their casuistical decisions: describing them as guides labouring under an inveterate blindness. It was one of the most difficult points in those days, to decide whether or not a person were bound in conscience to perform all such promises as he had made to his neighbour, under the sacred obligation of an oath. The oath most frequently adopted by the Jews, was that of swearing by the temple and by the altar, both of which being consecrated to God by the constant performance of religious rites, the Almighty was thereby called upon to witness the truth of the thing sworn to, and consequently the violation of such oath was looked upon as so much the more criminal.

However, the Pharisees, when consulted as to the criminality of a breach of this nature, failed not to answer, that whosoever swore only by the temple, was under no obligation of performing his promise; but that the contrary was the case, if he had sworn by the gold of the temple. It is to be observed, that a good part of what was offered on the altar, and given to the treasury of the temple, fell to the share of the Jewish priests, and therefore it not being their interest to have such promises or oaths dispensed with, hence they gave the above ridiculous decision, which Christ here rejects, as replete with folly and blindness. "Wo to you blind guides," said he, "that say, whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing: but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple is a debtor. Foolish and blind as you are; for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold; and whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing," you say: "but who

of the Pharisees in particular, for they were extremely zealous in getting menover to their party. And as, in point of ill example, the disciple commonly outdoes the master, Jesus Christ had therefore reason to say, that the proselytes of the Pharisees were twice more worthy of Gehenna than they themselves. To the same purpose is what Justin Martyr said to Trypho the Jew: "Your proselytes do not only disbelieve Christ's doctrine, but are twice more blasphemous against him than yourselves are;" undoubtedly, with the view of convincing the world of the sincerity of their conversion.

soever shall swear by the gift that is upon it becomes a debtor. Blind as you are; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it and by all things that are upon it. And whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by him that dwelleth in it. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon." Therefore you Pharisees make a foolish and unwarrantable distinction, or separation, between such things as are of themselves inseparable. This mode of reasoning made use of by Jesus, clearly shows that God is concerned, not only when we mention his sacred and adorable name in express terms, but likewise when we do it implicitly, that is, when we swear by any part of the creation, either because it is the work of his hands, or particularly consecrated to his service.

Lastly, Christ again condemns their hypocrisy,* in hiding a criminal soul under the outward show of virtue, by justly comparing them to sepulchral monuments. "Wo to you," says he, "because you are as sepulchres which appear not," and over which men walking, perceive them not, as being covered with grass. "Wo to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you are like to whitened† sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

These reproaches and woes were addressed to the Pharisees; but "one of the lawyers," feeling that some of these were applicable to himself and his brethren, "answering saith to him: Master, in saying these things thou reproachest us also." He thus brought upon himself and upon all his brethren, the anathemas pronounced against them in this second part of the discourse. Jesus accordingly taxes them with partiality, in explaining the various duties belonging to the several conditions of life; secondly, wtth their evil designs which he knew they had formed against his life; thirdly, with being a hinderance to the salvation of others.

In the first place Jesus censures their indiscreet severity towards the people, and the unbounded licentiousness in which they indulged themselves: two extremes directly opposite to the character of good pastors of souls. "But he said: wo to you lawyers also, because you load men with burdens," that is with a variety of difficult and perplexing precepts, "which they cannot bear; and you yourselves touch not those burdens with one of your fingers." Secondly, Jesus condemns the malicious and sanguinary spirit with which they persecuted all those who announced the truth to them. Of this guilt he convicts them from their own deeds, and foretells in the following words, the dreadful effects which will ensue.

* The vices of the Scribes and Phatisees are frequently to be found in Christians. The several characters of those that act by the spirit of a Pharisee and a hypocrite, are, 1. To be exact in trifles. 2. To be fond of distinction and esteem. 3. To be content with an external piety. 4. To entertain a high opinion of themselves, and to be impatient of reproof. 5. To be harsh to others, and ready to impose on them what they do not observe themselves, &c.

† The Jews, lest they should be defiled by touching the sepulchres, white-washed them on the outside, in order to distinguish them.

"Wo to you who build up the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the just," and who make it appear by your actions, that "your fathers killed them. And you say: if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Truly you bear witness, that you consent to the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and you build their sepulchres," not to repair the injury done to them, but to hide the evil disposition of your heart: for you are animated with the same spirit as your fathers. "Fill ye up then the measure of" the crimes of "your fathers," by putting to death him whom the prophets have announced, as this is what you are resolved upon in your hearts. "You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the condemnation of hell," you who so well imitate the malice of your fathers, who are already ingulphed in that place of wo? "For this cause the wisdom of God said," speaking of you: "behold, I send to you prophets, and apostles, and wise men, and scribes," as I sent to your fathers, "and some of them you will put to death, and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth," and "that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel the just, even to the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, it shall be required of this generation:" yes, "all these things shall come upon this" very "generation," in vengeance of past crimes.

This is an express and clear prophecy of the ensuing siege of Jerusalem, and of the consequent desolation of all Judea, which began thirty-three years after this period, a space of time which does not exceed the duration of one generation. It is not to be imagined that the Jews to whom Christ spoke, would be punished for crimes which they themselves did not commit, nor be more severely punished than they deserved: but he speaks of the Jewish people, which by putting to death their Messiah, should shortly fill up the number of their sins, so that God would destroy their whole nation, as if the blood of Abel and of the prophets came upon them at once.*

The Zacharias here mentioned is, according to many of the ancients, the father of St. John the Baptist. Others, with more probability, think it was Zachary, the son of Joiada, who, preaching to the people, was stoned to death in the very place where Christ was speaking.† It is supposed that Joiada had the name also of Bårachias; and St. Jerom tells us, that in an ancient copy of St. Matthew, called the Gospel of the Nazarenes, he found this Zacharias called the son of Joiadas. Many of the moderns suppose Jesus Christ here foretells the death of Zacharias, the son of Baruch, or Barachias, who was put to death in the temple by the faction of zealots, a little before the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans.‡

* See Maldonat.
† See 2 Chron. xxiv. 20.
‡ See Josephus, de Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 1.

Lastly, Jesus condemns the abuse they made of their authority to the ruin of souls. "Wo to you lawyers," said he, "for you have taken away the key of knowledge," of salvation, and instead of opening, "you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, by your words and example: for you yourselves do not enter in," since you refuse to believe in him who is the way, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter," by preventing the well-disposed from believing in me. "And as he was saying these things to them, the Pharisees and lawyers began vehemently to urge him, and to stop his mouth with many questions, lying in wait for him, and seeking to catch something from his words that they might accuse him."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO AVOID HYPOCRISY, AND TO PUBLISH HIS DOCTRINE WITHOUT FEAR. LUKE XII.

WHEN Jesus remained in Judea, he was followed by the people in like manner as he had been in Galilee. "And when" on a certain day very "great multitudes stood about him, so that they trod one upon another, he began to say to his disciples," and to caution them against the two vices of hypocrisy and timidity; each of which insensibly leads into the other. For it is usual with persons under the load of persecution to dissemble, by pretending a conformity to the opinions and manners of others: whilst on the contrary, whoever is above this criminal condescension, must expect to draw upon himself the persecution of those who hold different principles. Christ therefore said to his disciples, "beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;" for this, like a poison, taints all their actions. This advice he grounds upon the vanity and emptiness of such worldly prudence, since although for a time it may conceal a habit of vice under the cloak of apparent piety, yet this disguise shall one day be torn off. "For there is nothing covered," says he, "that shall not be revealed: nor hidden that shall not be known." For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness, shall be published in the light, and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be preached on the house-tops." This is what will happen particularly at the day of judgment, when the records of our actions, which are shut up during this life, shall be opened, and the most secret recesses of our consciences shall be exposed to the eyes of all mankind.

Jesus chose to caution his disciples against hypocrisy, in the hearing of this great multitude, purposely to root out of their minds the high opinion they had conceived of the sanctity of the Pharisees, which was no small hinderance to their believing in him.

He now arms his disciples against a dread of persecution, against all anxiety and solicitude as to their future lot, and against the difficulty they may find in confessing his name before

men. He points out to them what they are to despise, and what they are to fear. "And I say to you my friends," detain not in captivity the truth which I have confided to you, but announce it with intrepidity; "be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: fear ye him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell" for all eternity. "Yes, I say to you, fear him."

This precept concerning the contempt of death, might raise in the minds of his disciples some degree of anxiety as to their future state. For, after all, there is nothing more dear to us than life. To remove all disquietude on this subject, Jesus engages, that whatsoever they shall lose for his sake, shall be faithfully restored to them, and that the very hairs of their head are numbered, to the end that not one of them may be lost to them. He gives a further proof why they should rely with confidence on the providence of God, by instancing the tender care which he has over even the smallest parts of the creation. "Are not five sparrows," says he, "sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" Yes, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered: fear not therefore" lest God should forget you: "you are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny me before men," in word or deed, "shall be denied before the angels of God." Therefore the confidence of being so gloriously acknowledged by your divine Master, and the apprehension of experiencing so dreadful a confusion on the other hand, ought to strengthen you to undergo death for my sake.

This denying or renouncing of Jesus consists either in speaking erroneously against the Son of Man, by considering him as a mere man, and in this case it is a pardonable crime, because such a person may be better instructed and prevailed on to embrace the truth: or it consists in blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, that is, when a person renounces his faith against the conviction of his own conscience, and perseveres to the end in impugning the known truth, in which case his sin will not be forgiven. Therefore, says Christ, "whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man," and refuses to acknowledge him as the Son of God, because he sees him acting merely as man, "it shall be forgiven him," inasmuch as he is deluded by his senses: "but to him that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost," by ascribing the miracles of the Son of Man to an evil spirit, "it shall not be forgiven," because this can only be the effect of a voluntary blindness, which leads to final impenitence.

Lastly, Jesus considers the probable embarrassment of his disciples, destitute as they were of learning and ability, when called upon to make a public confession of him, to answer interrogatories, and justify their conduct. He therefore relieves them from all anxiety on this head, by assuring them that the Holy Ghost would not fail to suggest to them whatever might be suitable on those trying occasions.

"And when they shall bring you," said he, "into the synagogues, and to magistrates and powers, be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you, in the same hour, what you must say," for my honour and glory, and in vindication of your sacred character.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

CHRIST WARNS HIS FOLLOWERS AGAINST SOLICITUDE FOR RICHES, FOOD, AND RAIMENT, LUKE XII.

"JESUS was yet speaking, and one of the multitude said to him: Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," as being my undoubted right. He desired Jesus therefore, as the protector of the oppressed, to act the part of a referee, and to make a just partition betwixt them. "But" Jesus, who on all occasions preached the kingdom of God, and recommended a sovereign contempt of all wordly concerns, refused to interfere in this business, and "he said to him: Man, who hath appointed me judge or divider over you?" However, by way of compensation for this refusal, he inculcated in the following discourse, two truths of great importance: first, that worldly riches are frail and perishable: secondly, that we must banish from our minds all solicitude even concerning such things as are necessary to us. "And he said to them," adverting particularly to him who was the unjust detainer of the other's property, "take heed and beware of all covetousness: for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth," which is the usual pretext of the avaricious, but, on the contrary, it depends solely on God's will, by whom our life is either prolonged or shortened as he pleases. "And," to prove the truth of this, "he spoke a similitude to them, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself, saying: what shall I do, because my barns and granaries are too small, and I have no rooom where to lay up my fruits?" Had he, on this occasion, consulted the dictates of charity, he would not have been at a loss what to do with his immense crop; his barns would have been sufficiently large: but he chose to follow the cravings of avarice. "And he said: this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater, and thither I will store up all things that are grown to me and my goods. And I will say to my soul: thou hast, my soul, great plenty of goods, laid up for many years, be at ease, eat, drink," and "make good cheer.* But," to his cost, this delusive security was soon interrupted, "God said to him," probably by the dreadful voice of an apoplectic fit, or

* A soft and voluptuous life is too often the consequence of riches and plenty.

other mortal disease: "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee; and the things thou hast provided, whose shall they be? Thus it is with him that heapeth up treasures to himself, and is not rich towards God," that is, who has not laid up a treasure in heaven by charity and good works. Such persons lead their lives in good things, says holy Job, and in a moment they descend into hell. From the preceding example, Jesus draws a proper argument to prove that it behoves us to banish from our minds all excessive solicitude, even for the necessaries of this life. "And he said to his disciples; therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on.* The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." He therefore who has bestowed upon you your life and body will, no doubt provide food for the maintenance of the one and clothing for the other. Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither have they store-houses nor barns, and God feedeth them, how much more valuable are you than they?" He proves the inutility of all this solicitude by the following argument. "And which of you, by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If then you be not able to do so much as the least thing" of this nature by the utmost effort of your care and anxiety, "why are you solicitous for the rest," which is still less within your reach, and concerning which your reliance must be solely upon an all-powerful Providence. He proves how vain and fruitless is all solicitude about our raiment, by instancing the various flowers which deck the face of nature. "Consider the lilies" of the field "how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin: but I say to you not even Solomon in all his glory, was clothed like one of these. Now if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you O ye of little faith? Be not you then concerned what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, and be not elevated on high * on account of your plenty," nor yet distracted with various thoughts and cares how to live. "For all these things do the nations of the world seek after," that is worldlings who think of this world only, without hoping for another: "but your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things," and you ought not to distrust his all-bountiful Providence. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God † and his justice," by being assiduous in good works, which render men just in the eyes of God, "and all these things shall be added unto you" over and above. Lastly, Jesus proves the inutility of solicitude and anxious cares, by the promise which God has made of a gift infinitely more valuable; and this gift is a kingdom of infinite greatness and duration. "Fear not, little flock," saith he, "for it hath pleased the Father to give you a kingdom;" and how unlikely therefore is it, that he will refuse you those

* The concern of Christ to establish our trust and dependence upon God, shows that it is a rare as well as a necessary duty.

* The Greek text may be understood in either sense. St. Austin thus expounds it: "Do not value yourselves for the plenty and variety of your victuals." But the other sense is more agreeable to the context.

† The practice of the world is directly contrary to this; they first seek for riches, &c. and leave the care of their souls to an uncertain futurity.

earthly commodities which are necessary for the support of life. Jesus here styles the elect a small flock, when compared with the number of the reprobate,* and advises the faithful, instead of being anxious for the necessaries of life, to sell even their worldly goods, and to give the price to the poor, in expectation of an eternal kingdom hereafter. "Sell what you possess," says he, "and give alms. Make to yourselves bags, which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not; where no thief approacheth, nor moth consumeth," as it happens frequently to earthly treasures and valuables. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" because as the heart is uniformly attached to what it loves and there fixes its affection, so if your treasure be in heaven, there also will your hearts be fixed by a love superior to all earthly considerations; and hence by a constant meditation of eternal things, you shall be disengaged from a multiplicity of anxious cares and vanities, which are inseparable from a love of earthly and perishable goods.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

JESUS EXHORTS HIS FOLLOWERS, AND ESPECIALLY HIS MINISTERS, TO BE ALWAYS READY FOR HIS COMING. MATT. XXIV. LUKE XII.

To all his followers Christ says: "Let you loins be girt† and your garments tucked up," in order to be ever ready for immediate action, "and lamps burning in your hands," as it were to receive your master on his return home. This girding of our loins, and having lamps burning in our hands, are figurative expressions which in a spiritual sense convey a very instructive lesson. By the girding of our loins, Christ requires a temperance so exact, as to bridle all our passions, to mortify our senses, and to restrain them from whatever may be contrary to the law of God. 2dly. By the lighted lamps he requires the constant practice of all virtues, which may shine forth to the glory of God and the edification of our neighbours. 3dly. He requires moreover a constant watchfulness in his followers, which implies a proper attention to the respective duties of their calling, lest they give way to remissness, or be surprised by sudden and unlooked for temptation. This watchfulness consists principally in an habitual attention to the divine presence, so as ever to have the law of God before our eyes in all our actions, that we may steer clear of that fatal security which gives encouragement to sin, error, and delusion, and which strictly speaking,

* Of this proportion we may form some idea, by considering that of the four thousand years which preceded the birth of Christ, two thousand passed in the dark mist of ignorance and sin, mankind following the corrupt inclinations of nature; two thousand again passed under the law, which was barren of itself and inefficacious as to the salvation of mankind; and if in the succeeding ages of the Christian æra we set aside all idolaters, infidels, heretics, schismatics, children dying without baptism, and Christians of wicked lives, we shall undoubtedly find the number of the elect reduced to a very small compass.

† A comparison taken from the custom of the eastern people, who girded up their long garments when they went about any business.

may be called the sleep of death. "And you yourselves," says Jesus, be ever ready, "like to men who," during night, "wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding" feast; "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately." Jesus Christ is in heaven; there, in company with the saints, he already celebrates the banquet of his nuptials. His return with respect to mankind in general, will be at the day of judgment, and he will previously knock at the door of this world by the various scourges and signs which shall precede the last day. But with regard to each individual, this return of Jesus is the moment of our departure out of this life, when we are immediately to be judged. Jesus knocks at our door, when he strikes us with a mortal sickness; and we open it to him when we receive with resignation and joy, not only our illness, but death itself, which places us in his presence. Christ next proceeds to state the reward of such as watch in this manner, saying: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that he will gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and passing," as a servant before them, "he will minister to them" all things requisite for their spiritual refreshment and joy. "And if he shall come in the second watch, or if he shall come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." All this is a continuation of the same metaphor. The four watches of the night are the different stages of human life. The second and the third watch are youth and manhood, when habits of vice are most freely indulged. Those persons who shall have been watchful over themselves, during these two critical periods, shall be seated at the table of Jesus Christ, that is, they shall be made partakers of all the delights of the blessed, which Jesus Christ himself will communicate to their souls for eternity.

The strict obligation of our being thus constantly watchful is founded upon the uncertainty of the time of our Lord's return. "* Watch ye therefore," says Christ, because you know not at what hour your Lord will come. But this know ye, that if the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Wherefore be ye also ready, because at what hour you know not, the Son of Man will come." By this we are to understand, that if mankind were certain as to the hour and moment of their death, they would have some plea for passing the rest of their lives in a total forgetfulness of judgment: but as the case is far otherwise, and they are entirely ignorant of the day and hour when the Son of Man will come to judge them, it extremely behoves them not to suffer themselves to be lulled to sleep by sinful passions, but to be ever ready to appear before him to give an account of their actions. This is that true Christian watchfulness so often inculcated to us in the Gospel.

* It has been already frequently remarked, that it is usual with St. Matthew to join together several doctrinal instructions though given at different times and places. Hence it was judged proper to place here what he says of the good and bad servant in the discourse of Jesus Christ touching the last judgment, because it has a perfect affinity with what is here given from St. Luke.

"And Peter," greatly struck with these words, "said to him: Lord, dost thou speak this parable to us" only, "or likewise to all? And the Lord" intimated that he addressed himself to all, although principally to his ministers, who are the superintendents of the house of God: he therefore said: "Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord setteth over his family, to give them their measure of wheat" and victuals "in due season?" is it not he who is thus watchful? This metaphorical expresssion of the faithful steward is taken from the manners of those times, when the steward of the house was appointed to distribute monthly to the other servants the quantity of flour apportioned to each individual for his maintenance. In a moral sense, instructions, the holy sacraments, and the word of God, are the spiritual food and nourishment which a good steward is to distribute to those under his care: he is to be faithful in the administration of these spiritual goods, and not to squander them away on the unworthy, by meanly condescending to their importunity: he is to be wise, and with a steady prudence to find out and embrace such means as are most conducive to the salvation of souls. Such a one however is rare, and this is strongly implied by the question asked by Jesus: Who thinkest thou is the faithful and wise steward? In other words, where is he to be found? He further shows the abundant happiness prepared for a servant of this description, if his master on his return shall find him thus employed in the business assigned to him. "Blessed is that servant, whom when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods," in that supreme degree of happiness which is reserved for holy bishops and pastors of souls.

With regard to the bad and unfaithful servant, Jesus shows whence his misconduct arises, viz. from the blind and fatal security in which he lives. Hence considering that his master is not likely soon to return, and that he himself is as yet in the prime of life and in perfect health, he flatters himself with the hopes of a long life, and of having time enough to repent of all his vicious habits previously to his being summoned before the sovereign Judge. "But" Christ points out the fatal effects of this security; for "if that evil servant shall say in his heart my Lord is long a coming; and shall begin to strike his fellow servants, and to eat, and to drink, and be drunk with drunkards," that is, shall follow his own sensual passions and lusts, "the Lord of that servant shall come in a day that he hopeth not, and at an hour that he knoweth not, and shall separate him," that is, depose him from his office, or according to the Greek, shall cut him asunder by separating his soul from his body; "and appoint his portion with hypocrites" and "with unbelievers: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Christ however makes a material distinction between the various degrees of guilt which is incurred by those who shall have sinned through passion or malice, and those who shall have done wrong through ignorance. "And that servant," says he, "who knew the will of his Lord and pre-

pared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* And unto whomsoever much is given, much shall be required: and they shall demand more of him, to whom they recommend much." Thus the degree of punishment which is to be inflicted upon wicked and negligent Christians and pastors, will be in proportion to the light and knowledge imparted to them from above, and according to the use they have made of those talents entrusted to them for their own advancement in virtue, as well as that of others. But as the good use to be made of these talents depends upon the degree of charity or of the love of God which inflames our hearts, and which was to be merited for us by the death of Jesus, he here declares that he is come to spread throughout the world his fire of divine charity. "I am come," says he, "to cast fire† on the earth, and what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized," viz. the baptism of my blood: "and how am I straitened until it be accomplished" for the salvation of mankind? Be not surprised at this allusion to fire and blood. "Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided; three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law." This, however unnatural it may at first appear, may easily be explained, if we consider how the gospel being received by some and rejected by others, would produce all these divisions in the Gentile world. Thus when the faith of Christ was announced to a family consisting of five persons, three of these might embrace it, the other two continuing in their infidelity; and therefore they would be completely divided amongst themselves. The three who embraced Christianity would view with horror the obstinacy of the two Pagans, while the latter would not fail to vent their rage against the former, even perhaps so far as to imbrue their hands in their blood.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

CHRIST SHOWS THE NECESSITY OF DOING PENANCE—THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE. LUKE XIII.

"And there were present at that very time some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." It is

* Ignorance when it proceeds from a person's own fault, does not excuse, but only diminishes the fault.

† By this fire Tertullian and others understand the fire of trials and persecutions, which perhaps is equally, if not more agreeable to the context.

not easy to guess who these were, nor for what reason Pilate thus slaughtered them. The most probable conjecture is, that they were some of the seditious followers of Judas the Galilean, who denied that God's people were to pay taxes; and it is thought that some of them, coming to offer sacrifice in the temple, Pilate caused them to be slain at that very time, so that their blood was mixed with their sacrifices.* From this tragical event, Jesus sought to excite his hearers to repentance. He shows the pressing necessity of it by two examples of sudden and unexpected death; and secondly, by the bounds which God has fixed to his mercy.

1. The necessity of immediate repentance appears from the uncertainty of death, which surprises sinners in the midst of their crimes, without allowing them the opportunity of doing penance. Hence it must be considered as the part of true prudence not to defer our repentance, since it is the only plank to save us after suffering shipwreck of our innocence. We ought, with the greatest eagerness to seize hold of this necessary plank, and never to let it go: for since there is not a single hour of our lives wherein death may not surprise us, we should not, by a foolish confidence, risk our salvation, though for the shortest period of time.

That death may unexpectedly surprise us,- appears evident from the example of these Galileans, who purposing to offer sacrifice to God in the temple, were themselves immolated as victims; and secondly, from the example of the eighteen inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were suddenly crushed to death by the fall of a tower near the fish-pond of Siloe, or near the spring of water which rising at the foot of Mount Sion, feeds that pond. In effect, nothing could be more sudden and unforeseen than these two kinds of death. But as these were very extraordinary events, and not in the usual course of things, mankind might possibly consider them as a particular chastisement, inflicted solely upon those individuals, in punishment of some very enormous crimes, and by this their interpretation of the designs of providence, they might conclude, that the punishment of such persons did not apply to them, who were innocent of their crimes. Jesus refuted this objection, "and answering, said to them: think you that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things? No, I say to you: unless you do penance, you shall all perish in like manner.* Or those eighteen upon whom fell the tower in Siloe and killed them, think you that these also were trespassers above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? No, I say to you: but

* See Josephus, l. 18. Antiq. c. l. and 2.

* This prediction of our Saviour upon the impenitent Jews, was afterwards completely verified; for Josephus informs us, that under the government of Cumanus twenty thousand of them were destroyed about the temple, (Antiq. lib. 20. c. 4.) That upon the admission of the Idumeans into the city, eight thousand and five hundred of the high-priest's party were slain, insomuch that there *was a flood of blood quite round the temple*, (de Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 7.) That in consequence of the three-fold faction that happened in Jerusalem before the siege of the Romans, the temple was *every where polluted with slaughter* the priests were slain in the exercise of their functions; and many who came *to worship, fell before their sacrifices; the dead bodies of strangers and natives were promiscuously heaped together, and the altar defiled with their blood*, (de Bel. Jud. l. 6. c. l.) That upon the Romans taking possession of the city and temple, *mountains of dead bodies were piled up about the altar; streams of blood ran down the steps of the temple*; several were destroyed by the *fall of towers*, and others suffocated in the ruins of the galleries over the porches, (de Bel. Jud l. 7. c. 10.)

except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." This prophecy was fulfilled at the taking of Jerusalem, and there seemed to be even a coincidence of circumstances in the manner of their punishment, which deserves attention, inasmuch as they perished either by the sword of the Romans, as did these poor Galileans, or they were overwhelmed in the ruins of their city, as those eighteen had been crushed to death by the falling of the tower of Siloe.

2. Jesus proceeded to prove still further the necessity of repentance, by stating that God's patience, in tolerating the greatest sinners, is limited to a certain term, after which it gives place to his justice. To unfold this truth, "he spoke this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard; behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering, said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it. And then if it bear fruit," well and good: "but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Jesus left them to make the application of this parable to themselves, and retired.

In effect, this application is easily made, both with regard to Jews and Christians. The vineyard of the Lord is the whole house of Israel, consisting of the twelve tribes, or it is his Church gathered out of all nations. The fig-tree is the city of Jerusalem, a city as much raised above the level of other cities, as the fig-tree is above the humble vine. The circumstances to be observed in regard to this tree are its long continued barrenness; secondly, the long patience in the owner or proprietor of it; and thirdly, its being finally condemned to the flames.

Wherefore Almighty God sent his Son as the dresser or pruner of this vineyard, to bring into cultivation the Jewish land, and especially the city of Jerusalem, when now behold! this is the third year, wherein he has fruitlessly laboured in so ungrateful a soil. Therefore on finding that no amendment is to be expected, the Almighty issues out his orders to Jesus Christ to root it up. However, the dresser of the vineyard, pleading in behalf of the condemned tree, obtains from the master a respite of another year, in order thus to make a fresh attempt to render it fruitful, by means of trenching and manuring the soil around it. Thus Jesus Christ obtained of his heavenly Father the further trial of a fourth year, after the three first years of his ministry, in order, during this time, to preach the word of God to the city of Jerusalem before its final destruction. This he performed during the three months of this his last year, and his Apostles continued to do the same after his ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

3. But the subsequent words of the dresser to the master of the vineyard, that if this last effort to render it fruitful should prove abortive, he might then cause it to be cut down and condemned to the flames, are a prophecy that the city of Jerusalem, after having ill-treated, expelled or killed those of the faithful, who endeavoured to cultivate it by their preaching and the

sanctity of their lives, should be abandoned by Almighty God, to a spirit of rebellion, to continual seditions, and finally to the destructive arms of the Roman people. In fact, these events began to take place very soon after the persecution of the Church, and were completely verified in the seventy-seventh year of the Christian æra.

But this parable is applicable to Christians as well as to the Jews. For this barren fig-tree is a lively figure of a mere believing Christian, who, though he be planted in the vineyard of Christ's Church, by baptism and faith, and watered with many graces and favours, as Jerusalem was; yet his faith being dead and barren, yields no fruit of good works. However, Almighty God, the great Master of the vineyard, looks yearly for fruit from him, and if, after long expectation, he finds none, he resolves at length to cut him down, as an incumbrance in his Church, which is apt even to infect others that are sound, and bear fruit in due season. But upon the earnest supplications of some of his chosen servants, the execution of this dreadful sentence is deferred for some time, in hopes of his bearing fruit. In the mean time, the dresser of the vineyard trenches and manures the soil about it; that is, he uses all necessary care, by the private admonitions, or public exhortations, of his ministers, to put him in mind of his dangerous situation, and of the necessity of bringing forth the fruits of good works; but if all this care proves abortive, and he still continue barren, nothing remains but that the decreed sentence of divine justice take place, and he be condemned to everlasting flames. Let each one, therefore, apply the parable to himself, and examine how far he is concerned in every part of it; that so by a speedy amendment of life, and by worthy fruits of repentance, he may prevent the fatal stroke of divine justice, and may thus escape the punishment justly due to his crimes; for there is no alternative for us, but either repentance or damnation.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

CHRIST HEALS THE CROOKED WOMAN ON THE SABBATH DAY. LUKE XIII.

"AND Jesus was teaching in their synagogue on the Sabbath; and behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bent down, neither could she look upwards at all. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him, and said to her: woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" for so unexpected a blessing. "And the ruler of the synagogue, being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day," and likewise jealous of his superior fame, "answering, said to the multitude: six days there are wherein you ought to work. In them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day," which by the law

is dedicated to rest. Jesus took to himself the rebuke thus addressed by the ruler to the audience, and in answer put him to confusion, by contrasting what had been done in favour of this woman in a single instance, with what was performed by the rulers of the synagogue and the people at large, in behalf of the meanest animals every day of the week, without excepting the Sabbath itself. Wherefore "the Lord answering, said: ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you, on the Sabbath-day, loose his ox or his ass from the manger and lead them to water?" and if you do this to ease a beast of pain, "ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day."*

In these few words we may notice four separate arguments in justification of the conduct of Jesus, each of which was a sufficient answer to whatever objections the rulers of the synagogue could allege against him.

1. If we consider who it is here relieved, we find it to be a woman and a faithful daughter of Abraham, both according to the flesh and according to the spirit. With how much more reason may it be deemed lawful to afford relief to one of this description, than to one of the meanest of animals, to relieve which is acknowledged to be an act of humanity.

2. If we turn our eyes to the bodily infirmity which here met with relief, we may argue, that if it be lawful to relieve brute animals in their natural and healthy state, it must be still more allowable to deliver this miserable woman from the oppressive yoke of the devil.

3. If we examine the duration of the infirmity, we may justly infer, that if it be lawful to release a brute animal, which has been under restraint only for a few hours, with how much more reason is it allowable to loose a woman who has been held in captivity by the devil during the space of eighteen years.

4. If we consider the action itself, and the means employed, we must conclude, that if it be lawful to the Jewish people to untie their animals on the Sabbath-day, and to lead them out to water, it must be in a greater degree allowable to Jesus to address himself to a human creature in misery, and to lay his hands upon her head: both of which are less servile actions, than those which the Jews constantly practised without scruple. "And when he said these things, all his enemies were ashamed, and all the people rejoiced for all the things that were gloriously done by him."

This crooked woman may be considered as a lively figure of a soul bent and bowed down to earthly things, and held captive by the devil in the chains of sin. A soul thus enslaved, is infirm indeed as to all that is good, and instead of resisting the enemies of her salvation, she shamefully yields to all their temptations; transgresses the commandments of God and falls frequently into the most enormous crimes. Hence, immersed in carnal pursuits, all her affections are earthly, she will not, and cannot, look upwards to behold heavenly things, to think on her Creator, to consider his terrible judgments, and prepare for eternity;

* This shows us that the duties of justice and charity are always in season, and that we ought to omit no opportunity of performing them.

so that she resembles those wicked libidinous old men mentioned in Daniel, who turned away their eyes not to look up to heaven, nor remember the just judgment of God. However, Christ, as in the present instance, sometimes beholds a soul in this miserable condition with an eye of compassion; he prevents her with his graces; and by internal inspirations, or the external word of his ministers, calls her to him, in order to be converted and cured, by true repentance, of her spiritual infirmity. For this purpose he lays his hand on her, that is, he imparts to her spiritual help; and she is quickly raised up and enabled to see, love, and contemplate eternal things; and being thus made sensible of her past dangerous and sinful state, she blesses her God with a grateful heart, and serves him ever after with so much the greater fervour and love, by how much his mercy and goodness have been more conspicuous in her regard.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE DEDICATION OF THE ALTAR OF HOLOCAUSTS.* MATT. XIX. MARK X. JOHN X.

"Now it was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem." This festival was appointed by Judas Machabæus, in commemoration of his having re-established the altar of Holocausts, which had been profaned with the most abominable sacrifices by Antiochus, surnamed the Illustrious. The day fixed for this festival was the 25th of the month Casleu, which corresponds with our month of November or December. This solemnity Jesus chose to honour with his presence, "and" as "it was winter, and" the weather cold, "Jesus," for the sake of warmth, "walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came round about him," and endeavoured, by their importunity, to extort an explicit avowal of his being the Messiah. Since a declaration of this sort was considered by them as tantamount to his proclaiming himself king of the Jews, they eagerly wished for so plausible a pretext for seizing upon him and delivering him up as guilty of high treason. In order to draw him into this snare, they feigned a wish that he might be their long expected Messiah, pretending that they were ready to acknowledge him under that quality, if he would but authorize them so to do, by his own explicit declaration. Therefore they earnestly entreated him to remove all uncertainty on this subject, "and said to him; how long dost thou keep our minds in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." †

* This appears to be the proper place for inserting what happened during the feast of the dedication, after which, as St. John observes, Jesus *went beyond the Jordan:* for what follows in St. Luke, as said by the Pharisees to Christ: *go away and depart from hence, for Herod has a mind to put thee to death*, could not have taken place in Judea, where Herod had no jurisdiction, but in Perea, which is beyond the Jordan and in the dominions of Herod. This is the same place indicated by St. Matthew and St. Mark, when they say that he came to the confines of Judea, beyond the Jordan; not with regard to Galilee, but to Judea, as appears from St. John; for it is clear that all the Evangelists speak of the same place where John had baptized.

† St. John the Baptist had told them several times who Jesus was. See Jo. c. 1. He himself had not only owned it in plain terms to the Samaritan woman, Jo. c. 26. but he

Jesus saw into the bottom of their hearts, and refused to make the open declaration requested of him. This he chose to postpone until he should be brought before Caiaphas and Pilate, a short time previous to his death. He however justified himself from the blasphemy which they falsely imputed to him, and afterwards withdrew himself from their fury, by repairing to the opposite side of the river Jordan. "Wherefore," to the question whether or not he were the Messiah, "Jesus answered them: I speak to you," and have already told you, "and you believe not; the works that I do, in the name of the Father, they give testimony of me," and proclaim to the world my real character and quality. "But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep," refusing to believe in me, and to follow my doctrine, by your own wilful blindness. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them" from all eternity, by a particular love and affection, "and they follow me" as their shepherd, obeying my precepts, and imitating those bright examples of virtue which I set before them. "And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand." He speaks here of his elect, of those whom he calls by a special providence and mercy, and whom he blesses with more than ordinary graces, and with the gift of final perseverance. Their salvation is certain, not in such a manner as to be known to them, since they live only in a firm hope of it, which is ever accompanied with a salutary fear; but this certainty is owing to the power and efficacy of divine grace, which renders them victorious over all their enemies; over the devil and his wicked suggestions; over the world, its frowns and its smiles, and over their own frail nature, ever liable to sin and corruption. He proceeds to prove this in favour of his elect, by the following argument: "That which my Father hath given me," by begetting me from all eternity, as his only consubstantial Son, "is greater than all"* created things: "and" as "no man can snatch them out of the hand of my Father," so neither can any one snatch them out of mine; for "I and the Father are one" thing, not by an union of affection only, but one in nature, substance, power, and all other absolute perfections. "The Jews then rightly understanding that Jesus attributed to himself the Almighty power of God, by having the same nature with him, "took up stones that they might stone him," as guilty of blasphemy. However, that same divine power which was the object of their rage, hindered them from putting their evil designs into execution. "Jesus answered them: many good works I have showed you from my Father," in a continued series of favours and blessing; "for which of those works do you stone me? The Jews answered him: it is not for any

had frequently delivered this truth openly to them, that he came from heaven; that he was sent into the world, that all men should be saved by believing in him; that he was the Son of God and one with the Father. Hence they easily perceived that he made himself God: but they would have him declare it again in express words, that they might accuse him.

* We may look upon this as the true reading, on the authority of St. Jer. St. Hil. St. Amb. St. Aug. &c. The ancient fathers make use of these words, to show the eternal procession of the Son from the Father, and that they are one in nature, substance, power, &c. The reading in the ordinary Greek copies is different: *My Father who gave me them* (the sheep), *is greater than all.*

good work we are for stoning thee, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being man, makest thyself God." * This their calumnious imputation of blasphemy was the more atrocious, as originating, first, from the infinite mercy of the Father, who instead of sending a common man to redeem mankind, had deputed his only begotten Son upon earth; and secondly, from the infinite humiliation of the Son, who laying aside all his glory, had hidden his divine nature under the obscure veil of our human flesh. These were incomprehensible mysteries, it is true, but then the miracles wrought by Jesus sufficiently attested their credibility, and ought to have carried conviction to their minds. "Jesus answered them," by quoting the sixth verse of the eighty-first Psalm, "is it not written in your law: I said you are Gods?" God himself here speaks to judges and magistrates, whom he thus establishes as gods over their equals, by the share which he imparts to them of his power and justice. "Now, if he called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken," though mere sinful men: "and the Scripture cannot be made void" nor assert an untruth, "do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified," (by communicating to him all his holiness, "and" whom he hath "sent into the world" as the source and model of the sanctity of all men); "thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?† If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me," and my word, which is truth itself, "believe" at least "the works," these wonderful works which I perform in your presence: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father," so that we have one and the same nature, one and the same will, one and the same power. "They sought therefore" once more "to take him, and he escaped out of their hands," either by making himself invisible, or preventing, by his divine power, the execution of their designs. "And he went away again," till their rage should subside, "into the confines of Judea, beyond the Jordan, into that place where John was baptizing first," viz. Bethabara; "and there he abode. And great multitudes flock to him again, and he taught them as he was accustomed to do, and he healed them there, and they said: John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John said of this man were true," as appears by the miracles which he has wrought before our eyes. We ought therefore to receive the testimony which John gave of him, as to his being the Son of God and the Messiah. This reasoning made an impression on their minds, "and many believed in him."

* The Jews, says St. Austin, understood well enough what the Arians, Unitarians, &c, will not understand, that from Christ's words, it followed, that he was one and the same God with the eternal Father.

† Christ here stops the mouths of the Jews, by an argument which they could not answer, that sometimes *they* were called gods who acted by God's authority. But then he immediately declares that it is not in this sense only that he is God. First, because he has been sanctified by the Father, which St. Austin and others understand of that infinite sanctification which he has necessarily, by always proceeding from the Father. Others expound it of a greater sanctity and grace, above all other saints, given to him as man. But secondly he adds at the same time, and confirms what he had often told them, that he was the *Son of God sent into the world*, that his works show that *he was in the Father*, and *the Father in him*. By this they saw that he was far from recalling or contradicting what he had said before; and therefore, ver. 39, they sought to apprehend him, and put him to death, as guilty of blasphemy.

CHAPTER XC.

THE INDISSOLUBLE BOND OF MARRIAGE—THE EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY.
MATT. XIX. MARK X. LUKE XVI.

The lawfulness or unlawfulness of divorces was a subject of great debate in those times. Some who were of the school of Hillel, contended that a divorce was lawful if a wife were no longer agreeable to her husband; founding their opinion on those words of the law, if she hath not found favour in his eyes. On the contrary, others, of the school of Shammai, required a just and lawful cause for a divorce, which could be no other than the crime of adultery. Propter aliquam fæditatem.

The Pharisees were desirous of obtaining the sentiments of Jesus upon this important question, hoping perhaps they should be able from his answer to render him unpopular either with the male sex, if he confined within just bounds the unrestrained liberty which they assumed of repudiating their wives, or with the women, if he sanctioned by any mark of his approbation this odious practice of the men. "And there came to him the Pharisees, tempting him and saying: is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause" whatever, frivolous or substantial, just or unjust? "But he answering," condemned these divorces; first, in themselves; secondly, in their consequences, or the new engagements to which they give occasion; thirdly, indirectly, by giving his blessing to children who were the fruits of a lawful union. Jesus therefore at first, as it were to rid himself of so unpleasant a question, referred the Pharisees to the law of Moses for a decision of the case proposed: but in reality it was to have an opportunity of explaining to them a law which they widely perverted from the original intention of the law-giver. "He therefore saith to them: what did Moses command you? Who said: Moses gave permission to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away," without any kind of restriction, or assigning any cause. "To whom Jesus answered, and said," reprobating this their vague unrestrained liberty: "have ye not read that he who made man from the beginning made them a male and a female?" He created not a multiplicity of women for one man, either to join them to him in marriage at the same time, or to allow him to change them successively according to his fancy, whilst on the contrary, in the brute creation, he created several females for one male, with a view to the more speedy multiplication of their species. The state of marriage therefore should be regulated with a reference to this first model, consequently admits not among the faithful a plurality of wives, either at one and the same time, or successively, by divorcing one after another. This answer derived, from the original state of things, that is, from God's creating only one woman for the first

man, resolves not fully the question proposed to Jesus; but he chose to begin here by showing the design of the Almighty in the first institution of marriage.

The second reason is taken from the marked preference which a man is bound to give to his wife in all occurrences of life, a preference above every other person or thing in the world. Of all our connections one of the nearest must be that of a child with his parents, to whom under God, he owes his birth and education, and whom he is bound to assist in his turn, when labouring under poverty and want. Yet, ever since the first woman was taken from the side of man, the latter no sooner contracts a matrimonial alliance, than he must, in preference to his parents, inseparably attach himself to the company of his wife: "and" therefore "Christ said: for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."* Therefore now they are not two, but "one flesh," and to be esteemed as one person. This their unity is evidenced by considering the origin of woman. She was not formed of the earth as man was, but from a part of man's body, which afforded the materials whence she was made; and consequently when Adam was married to Eve, he considered her as no other than as a part of himself to which he was now reunited. This first matrimonial union is the model of all succeeding marriages; there consequently exists no union more strictly binding than the union of marriage, which may be said to effect even an unity of persons.

* Genesis, ii. 24.

This unity is farther proved, by considering the union of sentiment caused by conjugal love, and the union of that individual society which they contract for life. Upon the strength of these accumulated reasons, Jesus concludes: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." The Pharisees, who approved not this decision, but who yet had no reply to offer in opposition to the fixed laws of nature, endeavoured now to shelter themselves under the authority of Moses. "They say to him: why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce and to put away?" The objection here alleged is captious in the extreme, since Moses had merely permitted or tolerated divorces, requiring as a necessary condition the act of repudiation to be delivered in writing to the divorced party. But the Pharisees laid the stress of the commandment upon the divorce itself equally as upon the condition required, viz. the deed or writing attending such divorce. Jesus, in plain terms, discriminates that which they thus confounded together. "He said to them: because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives," but by no means commanded you, and this he did to obviate greater evils, it being evidently much better that husbands should separate from their wives than destroy them by poison, or any other way. "But from the beginning it was not so," since God allowed not Adam, or any of the ancient patriarchs, to dismiss their wives; insinuating hereby, that from this time forwards he would reduce the laws of marriage to their primitive

state. Jesus adds, that the repudiating of a wife, and the marrying of another, are here to be considered as two very distinct things.* "And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." As for the divorce, he declares this to be allowable only when a wife has committed adultery, because in this case she herself has first commenced the separation by her infidelity to her husband, which he only completes by proceeding to the allowed divorce. But as to a fresh marriage in consequence therefore, he declares, that whosoever marries a woman, after having repudiated his former wife, or marries a woman repudiated by her husband, is guilty of adultery, because a divorce by no means breaks asunder the bond of marriage, but merely puts an end or termination to the society of the married couple. We are therefore to understand these words, except it be for fornication, as an exception from the general prohibition of divorces, but by no means as approving of a fresh marriage; for although adultery committed by a wife may authorize a divorce, yet neither that crime, nor any other, can give a sanction to the second marriage of a husband during the life of his wife, nor legitimate any marriage which she may contract during the life of her first husband. This is an explicit answer to the question proposed by the Pharisees. For as the desire of a second marriage was the real motive which caused these divorces to be so frequent amongst the Jews, Jesus makes it appear very clearly, that if it be not allowable to marry a second wife, the first being yet alive, even when the reason of a divorce is strictly just and lawful, it must be still more unlawful to contract a second marriage, when the divorce originates from frivolous and insufficient motives, and when it is consequently unjust in the extreme. "And in the house again his disciples," greatly surprised at this decision, "asked him concerning the same thing. And he saith to them: whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Here is a definitive sentence passed against all marriages subsequent to and grounded upon a divorce, and whatever difficulty there may be in St. Matthew, it is here done away by the parallel texts of St. Mark and St. Luke. "His disciples" hearing this, "say unto him: if the case of a man with his wife be so," that the bond between them be indissoluble, "it is expedient not to marry," intimating that the effect of such a prohibition might be no small hinderance to the propagation of the human race. "Who said to them," that this effect was not to be apprehended, because "all men take not this word,"* that

* Whether in the old law the man who was divorced from his wife, could lawfully marry another woman, is a dispute among divines.

* To translate this as Protestants do, *all* CANNOT *take or cannot receive this word*, is neither conformable to the Latin nor to the Greek text. To be able to live singly and chastely, is given to every one that asketh and prayeth for the grace of God, as St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom take notice on this place.



Christ Blessing little Children.

is. relish not the happiness of perpetual continency, "but they to whom it is given" from above: "For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made so by man, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs," by renouncing all carnal pleasures, "for" the obtaining of "the kingdom of heaven. He that can take it, let him take it," that is, let those persons embrace a state of perfect continency who have strength to keep it. By which words he plainly indicates that a state of perpetual continency, previous to a voluntary engagement thereto, is entirely optional, and by no means obligatory; and likewise that they who embrace it either because of some vow which they have made, or from a principle of aiming at greater perfection, undertake a work highly commendable and meritorious.

"Then were little children presented to him, also infants, that he might touch them," and "lay his hands upon them and pray" for their spiritual good. This was a proof of the faith of the people, who concluded that the same hands which could restore instantaneous health to the sick, must necessarily impart every good to such children as they should touch. "Which when the disciples saw, they rebuked those that brought them," as if making too free with their divine Master, and requesting of him what, in their ideas, was beneath his dignity. "Whom when Jesus saw," he blamed their conduct; and to show to the world that his assertions in praise of virginity were not meant by him as derogatory from the holiness of the marriage state, he chose, by giving his blessing to these little ones, to bestow a signal mark of his approbation of that state of life which had given them birth. Wherefore, "calling them together, he was much displeased, and saith to them: suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God," of such as imitate their humility, their simplicity of mind and heart, and innocency of their manners. "Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, shall not enter into it." By which words he gives us to understand, that a confidence in our own strength, in our own free will, and in our own merits, is an invincible obstacle to salvation, there being an infinite disproportion between the smallness of our merits, and the greatness of eternal glory. "And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them.* And when he had" thus "imposed hands upon them, he departed from thence."

* Hence probably arose the ancient custom of presenting children to bishops and priests to receive their blessing. Nicephorus tells us, that the celebrated St. Ignatius, afterwards bishop of Antioch, was one of these children who received Christ's blessing on this occasion.

CHAPTER XCI.

JESUS SHOWS THE DANGER OF RICHES, AND PROMISES GREAT REWARDS TO THOSE WHO FORSAKE ALL TO FOLLOW HIM. MATT. XIX. MARK X. LUKE XVIII.

"Now when he was gone out into the road, a certain man," who was a ruler, "running up and kneeling before him, asked him, and said: Good Master, what shall I do, that I may receive everlasting life?" He here appears to have considered Jesus in no other light than as a holy and respectable personage. "And Jesus," in order to rectify his misconception, "said to him: Why callest thou me good? * Why dost thou talk of good? None is" essentially "good but one, that is God." By this reply, the young man was given to understand, that if he were sincere, he ought to consider him also as God, and not to separate in him goodness from the divinity, they being in his regard inseparable. The remainder of this chapter shows, 1. The duties incumbent on the rich. 2. The dangers which attend riches. 3. The advantages of voluntary poverty.

1. Jesus particularizes two sorts of good works which this young man should perform for obtaining the object he had in view. The first are works of obligation or precept; the second are works of counsel only, with the view of attaining to greater perfection. "And," with regard to the former, Jesus said: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." The youth having nothing to reproach himself with on this head, "said to him: Which?" expecting doubtless to receive some new precepts from one whom he viewed as a new teacher among the Jews. "And Jesus said: Thou knowest the commandments: thou shalt not kill: thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness. Do no fraud; honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man," with a degree of confidence, "saith to him: Master, all these things I have observed from my youth: what is yet wanting to me? Which when Jesus heard, looking on him" with an eye of complacency, "he loved him" with a more tender affection, and said to him: Yet one thing is wanting to thee: if thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all things whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me. The young man was not aware of the inordinate attachment which he had to the things of this world, nor did he know the extent of that charity which the rich owe as a strict duty to the poor and indigent. In calling for

* In the text we have given both answers, because as the young man addressed Jesus Christ with the title of *Good Master*, and likewise asked him, what good he was to do? therefore Jesus according to some interpreters, returned two distinct answers.

this entire sacrifice of his wordly goods, Jesus brought this his virtue to a severe trial, not indeed as if it were absolutely necessary to enable him to keep the commandments, but only as the means of keeping them with greater facility and perfection. I say with greater facility and perfection, for this renunciation of earthly goods removes the chief obstacles of divine charity, which are anxious cares and solicitudes for this world; it cuts off the abuse of riches, and even the power of abusing them; and consequently it extirpates the very root, as it were, of all sin, which is an inordinate attachment to the things of this world. Thus we see that evangelical perfection essentially consists in the perfect observance of God's commandments, and that this fidelity to our duty is greatly assisted by embracing not only voluntary poverty, but also the other counsels given to us in the Gospels, such as perpetual chastity and entire obedience. "And when the young man had heard this word, being struck sad at the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus seeing him become sorrowful, looking about, he said to his disciples: how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Amen I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus again answering, saith to them: Again I say to you, children, how hard is it for them who trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle* than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had heard this, the disciples wondered the more, saying among themselves: Who then can be saved?" For all men either possess riches or desire to possess them.

The dangers which attend on riches and affluence arise from the several evils and temptations which are occasioned by them. 1. Riches impose on the possessor the greatest duties of charity towards the indigent. 2. They are no small impediment to his discharging those duties, by naturally inspiring him with an eagerness both to keep what he has, and to add thereto by care and parsimony. 3. They not only inflame the passions, but also supply the means of indulging them. 4. They insensibly fill him with pride, self-love, a confidence in his own strength, a forgetfulness of God, together with a contempt for his equals, and a spirit of insolence even to those who are above him. Finally, experience evinces that many, when under the necessity of losing either their wordly goods or their souls, blindly sacrifice their conscience and eternal happiness, to this base passion for perishable riches.

These and such like considerations arising from the words of Christ, weighed so powerfully with the Apostles, that they considered the salvation of rich worldlings as next to impossible; "and Jesus looking on them," with a more indulgent eye, "saith to them: With men this is impossible, but not with God: for all things that are impossible with men, are possible

* This might be a common saying to signify a thing almost impossible or exceedingly difficult. Several moderns here understand a cable or ship-rope; but in the Greek it is *kamelon* a camel, which is different from *kamilos* a cable.

with God." He who is the master of man's heart, can easily disengage it from its greatest attachments. Wherefore this implies not, that God can or will save the rich whilst they continue enslaved to their riches, and to all those habits of vice which are frequently the concomitants of affluence; but that God by his all-powerful grace, can withdraw the rich from the abuse and corruption which usually follow affluence, by infusing into their minds the virtues of charity and humility, and all those other virtues in which they are so generally deficient. However whilst God gives wealth and opulent estates to thousands, to very few does he give at the same time the spirit of poverty, and the right use of riches. "Then Peter answering" for himself and his brethren, "said to him: behold we have left all things, and have followed thee, what therefore shall we have," seeing we have thus observed the counsel thou hast given to this young man? "And Jesus said to them: Amen I say to you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" that is, all Christian nations who compose the true Israel of God, and who are prefigured or represented by the twelve tribes of the Jewish people. What is here said has no reference to the judging of infidels, because having never embraced the Christian faith, or having afterwards relinquished it, they are already judged.

The reward here held out to the Apostles, is to be considered as peculiar to themselves at the day of judgment; but with regard to that other recompence which they are to receive even in this life, this is not limited solely to them, but promised to all those who shall imitate their example. "And there is no man," says Christ, "who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much now in this time: houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: * and in the world to come, life everlasting." This promise has been literally accomplished: 1. When the faithful that were in affluence, sold all their possessions and brought the amount to the Apostles, to be employed by them for the common maintenance of the indigent members, in the infant Church. 2. By that charitable and hospitable disposition which prevailed amongst the faithful, even to that degree that all things were common among them; each one's necessities being supplied from the common stock. 3. By that unity of religion which rendered all the first Christians, as brethren to each other, through a spirit of mutual charity, and consequently as ready, as their nearest relatives could have been, to supply each other's wants, according to their

* This is added by St. Mark, lest we should imagine that Christ promises here a temporal felicity. He does not promise sensual delights, but interior consolations, the peace of a good conscience, and spiritual gifts and graces, which are far more valuable than all temporal goods.—It may here be remarked how wonderfully the promises of Christ have been verified in favour of so many French ecclesiastics, who, after being stript of their property for Christ's sake, and driven from their native land, have found in other countries a secure asylum. In the English, though of a different religion, they have experienced the affection of fathers and mothers, of brothers and sisters; they have been admitted into their houses, and entertained at their tables with a liberality truly noble and characteristic of Britons.

several ages and employments in the Church. 4. This is moreover accomplished in the present times, when, with the view of seeking greater perfection, Christians abandon their goods and houses, their parents and friends, and enter into a religious order, where the number of their friends and goods are, properly speaking, multiplied an hundred fold.

Jesus declares, that besides the preceding promise, they shall receive in the next world everlasting life: "But" he adds, that "many that are first" here, "shall be last, and the last first." As if he had said to the Apostles; perhaps you may have some difficulty to persuade yourselves that a small number of poor fishermen, such as you are, will ever be placed as judges over all the great ones, the wise men, and the kings of the earth. But I here assure you, that many who take pride in this life from their high qualities and superior rank, shall be reckoned as nothing in the next life, since they shall be excluded from eternal happiness: whilst they who now in the eyes of worldlings are even humbled to the dust and dirt of the earth, shall then be exalted and raised infinitely above the heads of their proud oppressors in this world.

CHAPTER XCII.

THE LABOURERS OF THE VINEYARD. MATT. XX.

THE immediate design of the following parable was to show that the Gentiles, though called later than the Jews, would be equally made partakers with them of God's promises. In a manner no less clear and natural, it expresses the goodness of God in calling mankind to his service, in every age since the beginning of the world, and in every part of the life of man; pointing out at the same time, the different conduct of the Almighty respecting the choice which he makes of his elect. "The kingdom of heaven, that is, the Church of Christ, is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard; and having agreed with the labourers for a penny * a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour," * that is, between eight and nine, "he saw others standing in the market place idle: and he said to them: go you also into my vineyard, and I will

* A Roman penny (*denarius*) was about seven-pence half-penny sterling. It is put here for the usual hire of a day labourer.

* As the Jews divided their nights into four watches, each watch comprehending three hours; so they divided the day into four greater hours: from sun rise to sun set, and each of these great hours contained three lesser hours; so that the whole day, from sun rise to sunset, consisted of twelve unequal hours, as also did the night. The first of the great hours (comprehending the three first lesser hours) contained half of the space betwixt the rising of the sun and mid-day, and the end of this time was called the *third hour*. The next great hour was from that time till mid-day, called the sixth hour. The following great hour contained half of the time betwixt noon and the setting of the sun, the end of which was called the ninth hour. The *fourth* great hour comprehended the last three lesser hours, remaining till sun-set, so that the end of the eleventh hour mentioned here, ver. 6, began the last lesser hour of the twelve hours of the day, of which our Saviour said: Jo. i. ", are there not twelve hours in the day?

give you what shall be just,* and they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth" hour, which lasted from eleven o'clock till mid-day, "and" likewise about "the ninth hour," which is from two to three o'clock in the evening, and "he did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour" which answers to the hour between four and five, "he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him, because no man hath hired us:† he saith to them: go you also into my vineyard. And when the evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last, and so on to the first. When therefore they came who had come about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; but they received also a penny a piece. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house, saying: these last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering, said to one of them: friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny" a day? "Take what is thine and go thy way:‡ it is my will to give to this last even as to thee. Is it not lawful for me to do as I will" with my money, and this without exciting thy jealousy? "Is thy eye evil because I am" thus "good" and generous? "So," at the day of judgment, "shall the last" in this world "be the first, and those that have been "the first" here on earth, shall be "last in the kingdom of heaven;" that is, they shall be for ever excluded from it; this, it is to be feared, will be the misfortune of far the greater number; "for many are called" by faith, "but few are chosen" and admitted into glory, because they do not persevere in the grace and love of God.

The foregoing is the shell of the parable, which is easily explained, if we set aside the various times or hours in which the father of the family went out to hire labourers.

The father, or master of the family, is God himself, the public place is the world, where, previous to a call from God, each one is idle and doing nothing to the purpose. The vineyard is the Church of God, in which each vine is every faithful soul; the labourers are mankind in general. The hiring of the labourers is the calling of mankind into the Church by faith, which is a gift of God. The various hours of hiring are the different periods in which men are so called. The work performed in the vineyard consists in the endeavours used by the Apostles, and their successors, to plant the faith in the souls of the faithful: it refers likewise to the care which each one takes in the cultivation of his own soul by the diligent practice of virtue; the penny, bestowed as the price of labour, represents eternal life, or the kingdom of heaven; the steward, or overseer of the labourers, is Jesus Christ himself: the evening,

* The prospect of reward therefore is a good motive, authorized by Christ himself.

† All Christians are called (that is, put into the way of salvation) at their baptism.

‡ A Christian, truly humble, is ever satisfied with his lot, without envying that of others.

when the labourers are paid for their work, is the end of the world, for at the general resurrection each one shall be rewarded according to his works.

By the day of labour, many, with St. Gregory, understand all the time from the creation to the end of the world, and so the third hour is reckoned from Adam to Noe: the sixth from Noe to Abraham; the ninth from Abraham to Moses: the eleventh from Moses to Christ's coming: and the time from Christ to the end of the world is the twelfth, of which St. John says:* my children, it is the last hour. Other interpreters, by the day, understand human life, and by the different hours, infancy, youth, the age of manhood, old age, and finally, by the last hour, decrepit age, in all which periods God calls us to labour in his service.

Mauduit gives another explanation of this day of labour, referring it to that space of time which will intervene between the coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the world. In this view, the different hours of it represent the different missions which have taken place for the conversion of infidels in various parts of the globe, and which will continue through the course of all succeeding ages. Thus the first going out may signify the sending of the twelve Apostles, or of other apostolic men, who preached the faith throughout the world in the first age. The second going out, which took place at the third hour, may denote the mission which St. Fabian, Pope, sent about the middle of the third century into Pagan Gaul, where we find St. Saturninus directed to Toulouse, St. Gratian to Tours, St. Denys to Paris, and many others. The third going out, at the sixth hour, is perhaps the mission which St. Gregory, Pope, sent to England, towards the close of the sixth age, when St. Austin and St. Melitus were deputed for that purpose: or perhaps it is that mission which St. Boniface undertook in lower Germany, by the command of Pope Gregory II. at the commencement of the eighth century. The fourth going out, which was at the ninth hour, corresponds with the mission of St. Francis Xavier, towards the middle of the sixteenth century, as well as with all the succeeding missions in the East and West Indies.* Lastly, if it be allowable to offer a plausible explanation of prophecies not yet accomplished, the fifth going out, which is at the eleventh hour, may possibly be realized, when the gospel shall be preached to those nations that have apostatized from Christianity, as likewise to those that have been lately and are still to be discovered. This last mission is foretold in the Apocalypse, by the representation of an angel flying towards the south, having the eternal gospel to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, &c.

We may here take notice with St. Chrysostom, that in parables all parts are not significant, some things being said as mere ornaments of discourse: such are the murmurings here mentioned which cannot be found in heaven; nor can men pretend they are not hired into God's service: for to all God has given lights and graces, and has promised heaven as a recompence

* 1 John ii. 18.

* See in Mr. Butler's SS. Lives an account of the labours of the above apostolic missionaries.

of their fidelity. The rewards in heaven are also different, and they who are last called, if they labour with greater fervour, may deserve a greater reward than others who were called before them.

CHAPTER XCIII.

CHRIST HEALS THE DROPSY, AND RECOMMENDS HUMILITY AND HOSPITALITY TO THE POOR. PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER. LUKE XIV.

"And it came to pass when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath-day, to eat bread, that they watched him." On this occasion we behold Jesus working a miracle in the cure of a man sick of a dropsy. 2. Giving sublime instructions to all the company, as well as to the master of the house. 3. Addressing to them a parable descriptive of the glory of heaven. And behold there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy, and Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? But they held their peace:" not being willing either to give a sanction to that which they had hitherto uniformly condemned, or to pass an absolute sentence of condemnation against what they well knew him capable of justifying by invincible arguments. "But he taking him" by the hand, thus to remove all doubt of the author of his cure, "healed him, and sent him away" perfectly sound. "And answering them, he said," in justification of the miracle; "which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day, though with much toil and labour?" He hence left them to infer, that if it were allowable to save the life of an animal on that day, though with considerable trouble, how much more so to restore health to a sick man on the present occasion, especially since a word, or a mere touch of the hand, was sufficient to effect his cure. "And they could not answer him to these things." And each one being now seated at table, Jesus took an opportunity to give them two important instructions, one of which recommended to the guests there present the virtue of humility, the other the virtue of charity, which last was more particularly addressed to the master of the house by whom he had been invited.

"And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them; when thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him, and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee: give this man place, and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place," for it is not to be expected that the others, who are already seated, should relinquish for thee their several stations at the table. "But when thou art invited, go sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he

may say to thee, friend, * go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Thus, after curing a man swelled with a watery disorder, Jesus administers a remedy to such as were puffed up with pride. Of these two disorders, that of the mind, which may be termed a spiritual dropsy, is far more difficult to be cured. Our blessed Lord, sensible how deficient the Pharisees were in interior humility, advises them to practise at least that which is exterior, and which consists in offices of civility and condescension to our neighbour. To persuade them, he urges as an argument, that this conduct is the very means of preserving that credit and reputation of which they were so ambitious, since it ever reflects a greater discredit to be displaced from an honourable station, than it brings honour to us in the eyes of the world to have attained to it. Moreover, this apparent modesty and backward conduct, which induces us to sit down in the lowest place, may justly be considered as a leading step to bring us forward to a true and genuine humility.

Having thus recommended the practice of humility, Jesus now gives a lesson of prudence to his guest-master, by advising him to employ his riches in favour of the poor, and with a view to his own eternal happiness. "And he said to him also that had invited him: When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends,† nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich: lest perhaps they also invite thee again, and a recompence be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompence; for recompence shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just. When one of them that sat at table with him, had heard these things, he said to him: blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. But" Jesus answered him by the following parable, which tended to show that the greater part of the Pharisees and of the higher classes among the Jews would by their own fault, be excluded from that heavenly banquet. And "he said to him: a certain rich man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a farm, and I must needs * go out and see it, I pray thee hold me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee hold me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant; go out

* This may be one, though not the chief motive, Phil, iv. 8.

† Christ does not forbid us by this to invite our friends, our neighbours, &c.; but he would have us call the poor as well as them. While the rich feast, the poor must not fast. Or perhaps it may mean, that no reward is to be expected, except when such things are done through a motive of charity.

* Here is a necessity made of that which proceeds only from our passions and corrupt affections. No business is innocent, when it hinders us from taking care of our souls.

quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant. go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper."

The plain import of this parable was, that the chiefs and main body of the Jews would be rejected for their obstinacy, whilst the most despicable part of them in the streets and lanes, together with the still more despised Gentiles in the highways and hedges, would be called in by faith to partake of the eternal banquet of heaven. Accordingly, the poorer sort of Jews, whom, according to the prophets, Jesus was sent to instruct, were almost the only followers whom he had whilst here upon earth: and after his resurrection he sent his Apostles and their successors to the despised Gentiles, in order to compel them, by the invincible force of miracles, of prayers, of threats, and of martyrdom, to abandon the false religion of their forefathers, and thus gain possession of those places in heaven of which the Jews, by their obduracy, had rendered themselves unworthy.

This parable, however, is no less applicable to Christians than to the Jews. The eternal happiness of heaven is here compared to a great banquet, because the fruition of the Divinity will hereafter so fully content the desires of man's heart, as to leave nothing further to be desired: it is called likewise a supper, because each individual will partake of it only at the close of life, and the aggregate number of the elect only at the end of the world, when this supper is to be followed by everlasting rest and quiet. This happiness of heaven is designed by Almighty God for all mankind, and therefore he sends his servants, the ministers of his word, to invite us all to this celestial banquet, in the most pressing manner, because all things are ready and waiting our attendance. But the bulk of mankind pay little attention to so kind an invitation; they all, says the parable, began to excuse themselves. One said, that he had bought a farm and must needs go to see it; another that he had bought some oxen and was going to try them: the third made answer, that he had married a wife and could not come. This is a lively representation of all those worldly-minded Christians, who are so taken up with the affairs and pleasures of this life as to neglect the happiness of heaven and the eternal salvation of their souls. But we may observe, that these several pretences which keep numberless Christians from the service of God, will be of no avail hereafter with Christ, and therefore he declares that none of them shall taste his supper. His mercy, thus abused, will give way to justice; he will call in others to fill up the number of his guests: and he will make them eternally happy with him in heaven, whilst on the former he will exercise the rigour of his just judgments for all eternity.

CHAPTER XCIV.

CHRIST TEACHES THAT ALL THINGS ARE TO BE RENOUNCED FOR HIS SAKE. LUKE XIV.

"AND" on a certain day "there went great multitudes with him," and being well aware that the generality of them were enslaved to their evil inclinations and passions, without any design of changing their lives, he addressed himself to them, and pointed out, 1. The conditions required of all his followers; * 2. The reasons upon which these conditions were grounded: 3. The proper character of his true as well as false disciples. Wherefore, "turning he said to them: If any man come to me, and hate not † his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and moreover his own life," so as to be disposed to lose all these things, rather than offend me, "he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after me," by an imitation of my patience in labours and sufferings, "cannot be my disciple." The cross which Christ adverts to, consists, 1. In the long intestine war which we must wage against our passions and lusts; 2. In the mortification of our sensual appetites; 3. In patiently suffering the pains and difficulties attached to our state and condition of life, together with all the infirmities of our body, all the afflictions sent us by Providence, and all the contradictions and displeasures which may originate from our necessary intercourse with mankind. Christ hints that we are not inconsiderately to enrol ourselves in his service, but previously to view the difficulties which we shall have to encounter, and the obligations which he requires of his followers. This is what prudence alone would dictate in regard to all other undertakings. "For which of you," says Christ, "having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary whether he hath enough to finish it. Lest after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to perfect it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: this man began to build, and was not able to finish."

In this comparison is contained the following argumentation. To carry our cross so as to attain to the summit of Christian perfection, is an undertaking of much greater difficulty than to build a tower from the foundation. Now no one is so inconsiderate as to undertake the latter without duly calculating whether he hath wherewith to complete it. It therefore behoves every one who is engaged to carry his

* It was likewise the custom of the Jewish Doctors to lay before their proselytes what inconvenience would attend the embracing of their religion.

† Hate not, that is, Love not less. Gen. xxix. 31. Rom. ix. 13.

cross in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, to consider well his strength, and to examine whether he be able to bear its weight to the end, under whatever form it may be laid upon him; lest, after having undertaken it, he may find it too troublesome, and on that account throw it down, and desert the cause of his Master; thus making himself the laughing stock of all the devils and condemned infidels in hell, who will reproach him with having laid the foundation of salvation without being able to complete the edifice. To this raillery must all bad Christians be exposed for eternity.

Christ now proceeds to a second comparison illustrative of the same subject, as follows. "Or what king going to engage in a war against another king, doth not first sit down, and think whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that with twenty thousand cometh against him. Or else, whilst the other is yet afar off, sending an embassy, he desireth conditions of peace."

From this comparison results the following argument. By embracing the Christian religion, we declare war against all the powers of hell, against the world, and against ourselves: we become liable to be opposed by our nearest connections, by our parents, wife, children, brethren, sisters, relations, and friends; a species of warfare much longer and more irreconcileable than a war between two neighbouring sovereigns of unequal forces. Now of these two sovereigns, he that is the least powerful would certainly be careful to avoid risking a battle in which he foresaw that his small army must infallibly be overthrown. It therefore behoves us in like manner, either not to enrol ourselves in the army of Jesus Christ, or after being enlisted in his service, courageously to renounce our nearest and dearest relatives and connections, when they prove hostile to our spiritual interest, and seek to withdraw us from our duty. "So likewise every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth," and is not disposed to abandon all for the love of me, "cannot be my disciple." As a further elucidation of the real character of true and false disciples, Jesus compares them with salt. 1. In its state of perfection; and 2. In its corrupted state. In like manner as "salt is good," whilst it retains its strength and virtue, so nothing is greater and more estimable than the character of a Christian, who performs whatever his religion enjoins. He is a salt with respect to the rest of mankind, whom, by the force of his example, he preserves from being tainted by vicious habits. "But if the salt shall lose its virtue, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" It becomes absolutely useless. "It is neither profitable for the land nor for the dunghill, but shall be cast out" of doors to be trodden under foot by passengers. Thus it will be with the disciples of Jesus, when they give way to the corruption of sin, by abandoning the rules of a Christian life. They are thenceforward useless both to their neighbours and to themselves, and have nothing to expect but to be expelled from the society of the good, and consigned to the flames of hell. This forewarning being a subject of the greatest importance, Jesus exhorts them to reflect

on it duly: "he that hath ears to hear," says he, "let him hear," and carefully lay this up in his heart.

CHAPTER XCV.

VARIOUS PARABLES RESPECTING THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS, VIZ. THE LOST SHEEP, THE DRACHMA, AND THE PRODIGAL CHILD. LUKE XV.

"Now the publicans," a class of people odious and infamous amongst the Jews, and likewise sinners in general, were the foremost to follow Jesus, and they "drew near unto him to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Hence they inferred that Jesus must be equally unclean and profane with those whom he thus appeared to countenance. He justified his conduct by three parables, which all tended to show the great joy caused in heaven by the conversion of sinners. The first represents them under the figure of a strayed sheep, the second under that of a piece of money which is lost, the third under that of a debauched young man.

First, in regard to the lost sheep, Christ "spoke to them a parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it: and when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing; and coming home call together his friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost?" In this parable the strayed sheep represents each individual, who, by sin is lost and separated from God: the ninety-nine sheep are the just who have remained steady in the paths of virtue; the shepherd is Jesus Christ. He here leaves it to the Pharisees to make the application, which is easily done: for if it be commendable in the shepherd to go in quest of a lost sheep, and to bring it again to the fold on his shoulders with every demonstration of joy, how could the Pharisees, with any colour of equity, condemn the conduct of Jesus in associating with persons of a wicked life, with no other view than to bring them back from their strayed paths, since each of their souls was infinitely more precious in the sight of God, than whole flocks of sheep in regard of the shepherd? in such an undertaking, how could they consistently blame the charitable condescension with which he bears their infirmities and stoops to their weakness, so as even to eat at their table? Jesus farther declares the joy occasioned in heaven by the repentance of such sinners. "I say to you, that even so there shall be a joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." Whosoever therefore, after the example of Jesus, uses his endeavours to bring about the conversion of sinners, so far from contracting any share of their impurity or profaneness, per-

forms, on the contrary, a work most pleasing in the eyes of God and of his holy angels. However, the joy here spoken of in consequence of the conversion of a sinner, does not imply that God prefers one converted sinner to many holy persons, who have continued steadfast to their duty; but only that the conversion of a sinner affords to the angels of heaven a new and peculiar subject of joy, such as they do not experience from the perseverance of the just.

The second parable is drawn from the comparison of a lost piece of money. "For what woman having ten pieces of money, if she lose one piece doth she not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the piece I had lost?" * We are here to reflect how deficient the comparison is between a small piece of money and the infinite worth of a great number of souls, which are stamped with the image of God, and yet totally lost by sin. If therefore no blame attach to this woman, for her assiduity in searching after what was lost, how much less ought Jesus to be censured for employing in the search of lost souls his cares, his labours, his humiliations, his fatigues, and for testifying his extreme joy, when his endeavours are crowned with success. This he leaves to the reflections of the Pharisees, and concludes with these words: "So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

The third parable which places before our eyes a young man of debauched life, displays in the most amiable light the infinite goodness and gentleness of God, in pardoning and receiving the most abandoned sinners into favour, upon their sincere repentance. "And Jesus said: a certain man had two sons,* and the younger of them said to his father: father, give me that portion of the estate which falleth to me. And he divided the estate between them.† And not many days

* God esteems the souls of men as far more precious than all the treasures of the world. They are made and formed by his own hand, impressed with his own image and superscription, and from that stamp which carries a resemblance to the King of the whole world, derive all their value. But when they abandon God's laws and forsake the divine and rational life, a life of goodness and wisdom for one of sin and sensuality, then they are lost, lost to themselves, lost to God. Then this coin is debased, the impression obliterated and gone, and that piece of money, as to the worth and use of it, is as if it were no long in being.

* This we may understand to be the Almighty, who by creation is the common Father both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. By the elder son may be understood the Jewish people, who for a long time had been chosen to serve God, and by the younger son the Gentiles, who for so many ages had run blindly on in their idolatry and vices. In the prodigal we have a lively picture of the miserable condition of the Gentiles before the coming of Jesus Christ. 1. They were in a state of banishment from their father's house. 2. They constantly wandered from one vague system of religion to another. 3. They were stripped of all the riches of grace. 4. They were insatiable in their thirst after the pleasures, grandeur, and riches of this world. 5. They were reduced so low as to seek for their supreme happiness in the gratification of their sensual appetites. In this miserable and forlorn condition, the Father of mercies cast an eye of compassion on them, he ran forth to meet them when as yet at a great distance, favouring them with his lights and graces to see their wretched state and to be converted to him. In short, by baptism they were re-established in the high quality of God's children, and nothing remained for them but to nourish and preserve this divine life, by partaking of the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ slain for them upon the cross, and placed upon the altar to be the food of the faithful.

The second part of this parable, in the conduct of the elder brother, represents, in lively colours, the opposition which the Jewish people raised against the reconciliation of the Gentiles, an opposition which displayed itself in their blind ignorance and in their angry complaints. For they were at a loss to conceive how God could condescend to call these idolators to the faith, and even refused to associate with such persons as had any communication with them. In the twenty-second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have instances of this antipathy to the Gentiles, which carried them beyond all bounds, almost to fury and madness.

† This God does in distributing to each individual the different measure of temporal and spiritual blessings.



The Prodigal's return

after, the younger son, having gathered all together, went abroad into a far country,* and there wasted his substance, living riotously.† And after he had spent all, there came a great famine in that country, and he began to be in want.‡ And he went and put himself under a citizen of that country: and he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine ate; and nobody gave him any thing else. And entering into himself, he said: how many hired servants in my father's house abound in bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and say to him: father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.§ And rising up, he came to his father: and when he was yet a great way of, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father," without upbraiding him, "said to his servants: bring forth quickly the first robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his eldest son was in the field, and when he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing; and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him: thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe. And he was angry,* and would not go in. His father therefore going out began to entreat him. And he answering, said to his father: behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son is come, who has spent his fortune with harlots, thou hast killed the fatted calf. And he said to him: son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine by right of birth. But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found." All these figures are verified in the conversion of a penitent sinner. The Almighty, as a tender father, first excites in him a desire of repentance; he sees him whilst yet a great way off in his naked and forlorn condition, and is touched with pity and compassion for him: he runs out to meet him; he lovingly receives him into his embraces; he clothes him again as his son with the sacred robe of justifying grace; he puts a ring of great value on his finger, as it were a pledge of the Holy Ghost dwelling

* Which is the case with every sinner who departs far from God.

† Thus we are apt to abuse the favours of God.

‡ A lively figure of a sinner stripped of all the goods of grace and merit.

§ Such is the humble disposition of a true penitent, who has wearied himself in the ways of vice and impiety. I will arise, so must the sinner quit the sad life he is engaged in.

* And so were the Pharisees (whom he here reproves) for his receiving sinners with so much compassion: and so were the Jews afterwards, when the Gentiles were converted and made fellow-heirs with them.

within him, as in his temple, and as an assurance of the grace necessary for his remaining steadfast in that fidelity which he renews to his heavenly Father; for a ring has ever been considered as the emblematical seal of a faithful and sincere mind. He causes shoes to be put on his feet, by which is signified a protecting grace, to enable him to bridle his passions and to fortify his soul against all scandals which may cause him to stumble. He orders the fatted calf to be killed, that is, he admits him to the divine banquet of the body and blood of his only Son, and causes his heavenly court to celebrate a feast of joy for his happy conversion: in short, he restores him completely to the honour and dignity of his child, and to all the ornaments of virtue and grace which he had forfeited by sin. What an encouragement is this to every poor sinner to quit the husks of swine, and to run to the embraces of so merciful a Father! If he only repent like the prodigal son, for having left his Father's house, he shall meet with the same kind reception, and shall like him rejoice to see himself restored to his former state of grace and friendship. To the passing confusion which may attend an humble confession of his guilt, will succeed a peace and pleasing joy, far superior to all the sinful enjoyments of the world.

CHAPTER XCVI.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD. LUKE XVI.

To the parable of the repenting profligate, Jesus added another, by which we are all taught how to redeem by alms the punishment justly due to our sins. It is particularly applicable to the rich, here represented under the figure of a steward who superintends his master's affairs, and collects his rents. One of this description he considers, 1. In his bad management and treacherous breach of the trust reposed in him. 2. In regard to his shrewd policy towards his master's tenants, whom he thus engages to receive him, after his disgrace and dismissal. "And he said to his disciples: there was a certain rich man who had a steward: and an ill report was brought to him concerning him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: what is this I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself, what shall I do, because my lord taketh away the stewardship; To dig I am not able: to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: how much dost thou owe my lord? But he said an hundred barrels * of oil, and he said to him, take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another:

* The word *batus*, in the original, contains nine gallons three quarts. See Ezec 45.

and how much dost thou owe? Who said an hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: take thy bill and write eighty" paid, so that twenty only will remain. "And the lord commended the unjust steward," not for his infidelity, but "that he had done prudently," in providing for himself against the evil day: "for the children of this world are wiser in their generation," that is, in their temporal concerns, than the children of light," in the affair of salvation.*

The application of this parable is very obvious, for we are all stewards of the Almighty, who has intrusted to us the care of his goods, and we act the part of faithless and unjust stewards when we employ the talents of mind or body, of nature or of grace, intrusted to us to any other purpose than that of the divine glory: if therefore we have wasted the goods of our great Master, we have reason to apprehend that he will quickly call us to an account and deprive us of our stewardship. Those words in the parable, give an account of thy stewardship, are therefore addressed to every one of us, and we know not how soon we may be called to a dreadful examination, on the issue of which eternity depends. However, this parable seems to be more particularly designed for the rich, because they are more properly styled and considered as the stewards of the Almighty, as having received from him in trust a much larger portion of earthly goods; and although by human laws men are allowed to be the absolute and indisputable proprietors of these goods, yet with respect to God, they are not masters but only stewards and dispensers, and will one day most certainly be called to a strict account as to the use which they shall have made of all temporal blessings. Wherefore, in reference to the above parable, let us consider a person in affluence who has grown old in the enjoyment of worldly honours and pleasures, and who finds himself at the eve of being stript of all by approaching death. Sensible of his past misconduct and of the impending rigour of divine justice, he begins now seriously to look out for some means of provision for the life to come. Of these expedients three occur to his perplexed mind.

The first is, to chastise his body by salutary works of penance. But his advanced age, the weakness of his delicate, and hitherto pampered frame, and his frequent infirmities, are an insuperable bar to this measure. The second is, relatively to the ancient discipline of the Church, to cast himself at the feet of the faithful at the entrance of the Church, publicly to confess his past crimes, and to beseech the ministers of God to intercede in his behalf at the throne of mercy. This implies, in the style of those times, a ready compliance with all the humiliating forms of public penance, as enjoined by the ancient canons, when sinners were required to remain prostrate before the church door at the feet of the faithful, to attend the catechetical instructions with the neophytes and catechumens, and to depart out of the church before the com-

* This remark of Jesus respecting the superior prudence of worldlings in their temporal concerns over the children of light, leads us to believe that what is here mentioned must have actually taken place in his time between a person of property and his steward: for otherwise this comparison between their different way of acting would have been to no purpose.

mencement of the solemn parts of the mass. The unavoidable shame which this would occasion, renders such a penance impracticable to his nice feelings. Thirdly and lastly, he considers within himself that he is possessed of great riches, and although they are only a trust confided to his care, he rightly judges that he can employ them to no better purpose than to disarm the divine justice, by freely distributing them to the poor; thus hoping, as it were, artfully to gain admission to eternal happiness. He therefore inquires diligently into the wants of the poor, and readily relieves them by a charitable distribution of his wealth. The Almighty cannot but applaud the wise policy of this rich man, in thus screening himself from the rigour of his justice, by imposing, as it were, upon his Providence, that is, by a wise distribution of the worldly goods which his Providence intrusted to his care. Wherefore from the preceding parable, Jesus infers the necessity of alms-deeds in these words: "And I say to you: make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity," pour forth your riches into the bosom of the poor, "that when you shall fail, they may receive you into eternal mansions." Mammon is a Syriac word for riches, and they are called unjust and iniquitous, not of themselves, but because they are many times the occasion of unjust dealings, and of all kinds of vice. Besides they are unjust in their false promises, since they hold out the prospect of a happiness which they cannot realize. Secondly, In their appearance, because they appear as true and solid blessings whilst they are false and deceitful. Thirdly in the use to be made of them; for in this we consider ourselves as free from all control under the idea of our being absolute proprietors, whilst in truth, we are but trustees and distributors subordinate to the designs of an all-wise Providence. Moreover we are to consider alms-deeds as a trial and proof of our fidelity to God in small things, and that he is ever ready to commit to our trust riches of much greater value, if he finds us faithful in the distribution of temporal goods. Riches as we have above observed, are defective in many respects; they are likewise treacherous and foreign to our main purpose and concern. However, it is to be fairly presumed, as Christ observes, "that he who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful in that which is greater: and he who is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater," since if he has given way to a small temptation, he cannot be expected to resist others of greater force and violence. "If then," says Christ, "you have not been faithful in the" distribution of "unjust mammon: who will trust you with the" only "true" riches, the spiritual riches of divine grace? "And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's (for such we may call worldly wealth, which daily passeth from one to another), who will give you that which is your own," that is, how can you in this case hope that God will bestow upon you his spiritual riches and gifts, which if rightly managed, will be your own for eternity? In effect the improper use which we make of the former, renders us unworthy of the latter, and our notorious unfaithfulness in lesser

matters, is more than a presumptive proof, that we shall be equally unfaithful in trusts of greater consequence. Moreover we may observe, that a neglect of alms implies the absence of a truly Christian spirit, since the duty of giving alms is never omitted, but through a blamable attachment to worldly goods. He who is inordinately attached to his riches makes them his idol, and considers them as his God: hence Christ lays down this maxim: "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Now the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him, And he," knowing the dark recesses of their hearts, "said to them; You are they who justify yourselves before men," by an appearance of sanctity and disinterestedness; "but God knoweth your hearts" to be tainted with sordid avarice. "For that which is high" and plausible "to men, is an abomination before God." They might perchance answer this accusation by alleging, that the law of Moses held out worldly goods as a reward to those who were faithful observers of it. To this Jesus replies, that "the law and the prophets were" in force, "until John" the Baptist, and consequently till then, earthly goods were promised to men as figures of heavenly ones which they were to look for: but "from that time the kingdom of God is preached" without shadow or figure, and every one who aspires to it, "striveth with violence for it," by mortifying his passions and renouncing all attachment to his worldly goods. The Pharisees might hence imagine that the gospel was contrary to the law. By no means, added Jesus, "and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail of its accomplishment." The truth is, that the worldly riches, promised by the law, were no more than shadows and figurative promises, the real object of which were the solid riches of heaven before mentioned, which alone can make us happy and completely satisfy the heart of man.

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE RICH GLUTTON AND LAZARUS. LUKE XVI.

In the preceding chapter we have seen the great advantages of riches, when well employed in works of mercy, in this we may behold the endless misery which follows the abuse of them. "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus * who lay at his gate full of sores, desiring to be filled with

* That this is no parable, but a real fact, is affirmed by St. Ambrose, (in hunc locum) Tertullian (l. de an. c. 7.), &c, which is likewise sufficiently evident from the context. For the beggar is specified by name, viz. Lazarus; if the rich man be not mentioned, it is to signify that his name is blotted out of the book of life; moreover he tells Abraham that he has five brothers, who were probably still living at the very time when our Lord spoke this, therefore to save their honour, he named not their brother who was burning in hell.

the crumbs, that fell from the rich man's table, and no man did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores," which he patiently permitted, being perfectly content with whatever comfort it pleased God to send him in his sufferings. Thus with the utmost patience Lazarus resigned himself to his forlorn condition; he made no complaint against the Providence of God, nor did he murmur at the unkind treatment which he received from man. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," that is, into that particular place of rest, where the souls of the patriarchs and of all the just remained, till Christ, by his death, should open heaven to them, and with them ascend triumphant into glory. Such was the favourable lot of Lazarus when death put an end to his sufferings. "And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell.* And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw," in a kind of vision, "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus," now happy, in his bosom. "And he cried and said: Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.† And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things ‡ in thy life-time and likewise Lazarus evil things. But" here the scene is reversed, "now he is comforted and thou art tormented; and besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos," separating the just from the reprobate, "so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither. And he said: then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify to them" the reality and importance of this invisible world, "lest they also come into this place of torments;" for he apprehended, it seems, lest the future damnation of his brethren, occasioned in part by his bad example, might be a sensible addition to his torments. "And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets" for their instruction: "let them hear them. But he said, No, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead;" * because such a one could come with no greater authority, could deliver no better motives to repentance, nor give any greater assurance of the truth. Whence we may conclude, that they who pay no regard to an authority so sacred and so universally acknowledged as that of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the Apostles, would be equally inattentive and callous to the testimony of a dead person, raised

* This shows that instantly after death the souls of the just made perfect are carried by angels into the place of their eternal repose, whilst the souls of the wicked are dragged by devils into the abyss of hell.

† If we reflect that it is the soul alone which in the body feels all the impressions of pleasure, or pain arising from external objects, it will easily be conceived that, after the separation of soul and body, the Almighty may equally excite in the former the same sensations which it received from outward objects whilst he reunited to the body.

‡ We see here that to expose a man to eternal misery, nothing more is required than to enjoy all the good things of this world according to his own will.

* St. Luke here inserts four instructions which have no connection with each other, and which therefore we have given above in different places. See note on chapter 71.

again to life, by pronouncing him either a phantom or an impostor. But although we suppose them convinced of his resurrection, yet still their obdurate and habitual attachment to a voluptuous life, would be more powerful to detain them in the same evil course, than the exhortations of a man risen from the dead, would have influence to induce them to a change of life and manners. The impenitence of many who saw another Lazarus raised from the dead, and the wickedness of the soldiers who were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and who yet, on that very day, suffered themselves to be hired to bear false testimony against it, are most striking illustrations of this truth.

The above instructive history deserves the serious attention both of the rich and the poor. The former may learn from it the dreadful consequences to be apprehended from riches, when made subservient to sensuality, luxury, and ambition; and the latter are taught by the example of Lazarus, to make their poverty and sufferings, however grievous to nature, instrumental to their future happiness, by bearing them with patience and resignation to the will of heaven.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED JUDGE, AND OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW. * LUKE XVIII.

PRAYER being the preservative of our faith and of our religion, Jesus Christ proposed a parable, or rather related the history of a real event, to recommend to us perseverance in this holy exercise. "And he spoke a parable to them that we ought always to pray and not to faint," or be weary at our devotions. This precept of praying always does not consist in a multiplicity of vocal prayers to be recited at all hours upon our knees: for in this sense it would be incompatible with other essential duties. What is here recommended to us is to walk always in the presence of God by a spirit of prayer, of love, and of attachment to his divine Majesty, and frequently to lament, with inward sighs, our daily offences against him; all which may be done in the midst of our occupations. It is thus the saints understood and practised this precept, and thus they became saints.

This parable places before our eyes, 1. A judge, noted for the injustice of his decisions; 2. The same judge prevailed upon by dint of prayers and entreaties. The conclusion is obvious, that the Almighty, who is ever just and merciful, will, by our perseverant prayers, be far more easily prevailed upon to grant us the effect of our petitions. Wherefore, Jesus thus addressed his hearers, "saying: There was a judge in a certain city, who neither feared God nor regarded man," being above every check both of conscience and of honour. By his profli-

* See on this subject chap. 82. No. 2.

gate conduct, it plainly appears, that he was a Sadducee in his creed, and as such believed his soul to be mortal; and therefore he had no dread of the divine vengeance after this life, but sacrificed all to his present personal interest. "And there was a certain widow in that city," unjustly oppressed by the overbearing conduct of a powerful opponent. She was destitute, it seems, of every means to secure in her favour the above mentioned judge, since she possessed neither personal influence, riches, nor credit; and consequently had no prospect of gaining his interest either through fear or hope. Therefore, depending solely upon the justice of her cause, "she came to him saying: Avenge me * of my adversary. And he would not for a long time" pay any attention to her. "But afterwards," finding her absolutely troublesome, he resolved to rid himself of her importunity, by deciding the cause in her favour: and he said within himself: Although I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow is troublesome to me, I will avenge her, lest continually coming, she tire me out with reproaches.† And the Lord said: Hear what the unjust judge saith" on this occasion, actuated neither by a dread of the divine vengeance, nor by any human influence, but merely in consequence of the woman's unceasing importunity. "And will not God," who is so just and merciful, and so willing to listen to the prayers of the oppressed, "revenge his elect, who cry to him day and night in their distress? and will he have patience in their regard? I say to you, that he will quickly revenge them," and rescue them from all their enemies.

This has probably a particular reference to the latter end of the world, when the faithful shall be oppressed by all manner of persecutions; and therefore it is then they should redouble their fervent prayers for God's help and protection. But since the number of believers will be but small, comparatively with the infinite number of apostates, Jesus insinuates, from the great want of faith at that period, the consequent neglect of prayer, which is founded on faith. "But the Son of Man," says he, "coming, will he find, think you, faith on earth?" An expression descriptive of the extreme rarity of that perfect faith which is necessary for perseverance in prayer. In effect, if we may judge from the present alarming state of infidelity in the world, and from the seeming indifference with which Christians perform the great duty of prayer, is there not reason to fear that mankind are fast approaching to that general apostacy from the faith here foretold by our Blessed Redeemer?

* That is, do me justice. It is a Hebraism.

† Sugillet me, Gr. *upopiaze me* which implies even blows; and might have been said by the judge in a sort of jocular manner; for observing that her entreaties ended in complaints, and that these were succeeded by reproaches, and reproaches by injurious language, he feigns to be under some degree of apprehension, lest at length she should proceed to an open assault against his person.

CHAPTER XCIX.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN. LUKE XVIII.

AFTER having declared perseverance to be one of the principal conditions which ought to accompany our prayer, Jesus proceeds to state another condition not less necessary, viz. humility and diffidence in our own merits. "And" therefore, "to some who trusted in themselves as just and despised others, he spoke this parable," which yet has the appearance of a real history. "Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. These, it will appear, were widely distinguished from each other: 1. In the opinion which they conceived of their respective merits: 2. In the object of their prayers; 3. In the success of their petitions. "The Pharisee standing" upright, "prayed thus within himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this Publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithe of all that I possess." Whilst the Pharisee was thus sounding his own praises, "the Publican standing afar off," in the outer court allotted to the Gentiles, "would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Who would not have imagined from outward appearances, that the former of these was about to be loaded with blessings by the Almighty, as being a model of sanctity; and the latter consigned to eternal flames as a profligate convicted by his own confession? Jesus however pronounces a very different sentence, declaring that it is not the Pharisee but the humble Publican who is absolved from his crimes. "I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Let us learn from this example the necessity of humility, and the dreadful consequences of trusting in ourselves as just, or of despising others. Those that are truly just, are far from thinking themselves so; they are far from glorying in themselves; far from attributing any thing of good to themselves. In the judgment which they make of themselves, they always sit down, according to the rule of their great Master, in the lowest place; their eyes are open to their own defects, and shut to those of others, at least where their duty does not require their inspection and correction of them. They are convinced that they have nothing in themselves to which they can trust, and that it is only owing to God's great mercy, that they have not been guilty of the most enormous crimes; and therefore they never presume to despise any one, not even the most scandalous sinner, lest they should be found worse than him in the sight of God, through their pride and self-conceit, crimes which they know to be an abomination to the Lord.

If we examine the prayer of the Pharisee, we find it full of nothing but of this pride and self-conceit, which was the cause of his condemnation. He neither craved mercy nor grace of God: he asked for nothing, because he considered himself to be rich and wealthy, and not to stand in need of any thing; whilst in reality, through his pride, he was wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* His whole prayer was only an enumeration of his own good works, with a censure upon the rest of men, and a condemnation of the poor Publican; and as he asked for nothing, so he obtained nothing, but only carried home with him his own condemnation. On the contrary, the Publican sets before us a very different example. He has a true sense of his sins, and of what he has deserved for them; and therefore he condemns himself as unworthy to lift up his eyes to heaven, or to come near to the altar of God; but standing afar off, with his countenance humbly cast down upon the ground, he strikes his breast saying: "O God be merciful to me a sinner." Now this profound humility, this great sense of sorrow and contrition for his sins, which accompanied his prayer, was what rendered it acceptable to God; it procured him a favourable audience, and a ready discharge from all his sins: and he went home justified in the sight of God, and highly pleasing to him, whilst the proud Pharisee, who was so vain and conceited of his own good works, met with nothing but contempt and humiliation; for God "resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble." *

CHAPTER C.

CHRIST SHOWS THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF HIS KINGDOM. † LUKE XVII.

Jesus here states to the Pharisees the wide difference between his kingdom and that of Antichrist. His is all interior and spiritual, whilst that of Antichrist is earthly and tyrannical. Wherefore, "being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come? he answered them, and said: the kingdom of God cometh not so as to be observed. Neither shall they say: behold he is here, behold he is there; for lo, the kingdom of God is within you," and the blessings of it you may now enjoy by believing in him whom God hath sent to announce to you his will. The Pharisees had frequently heard Jesus declare, that the kingdom of God was at hand, and they now requested him to specify the precise period of time when this great revolution would take place. They were prepossessed with the idea

* Apoc. iii. 17.

* James iv. 6.

† What Christ says here of his kingdom and coming, many authors refer to the last judgment; others, with more probability, explain it of the kingdom of Jesus Christ established throughout the world by the preaching of the gospel; as likewise of his coming to destroy the Jews the great enemies of his reign. Christ clearly foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the world at the last judgment. The accomplishment of the first prophecy is a striking confirmation of the second.

of a temporal and glorious sovereignty which the Messiah would establish in the world, and this idea the Jews retain to the present day; in consequence of which they flatter themselves with the expectation of reigning over all other nations. But in announcing the approach of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus had no other kingdom in contemplation, but that interior one which God possesses in the souls of the just, after destroying there the empire of the devil, by the doctrine of the gospel and by the infusion of the Holy Ghost; in other words, by faith and charity, he reigns triumphantly in the hearts of all his elect. This kingdom by which he reigns is in reality the same in this life as it will be in the life to come, with this sole difference, that here it is only begun, and hereafter it will be perfected and consummated in glory.

Wherefore to the question proposed by the Pharisees, Jesus replied, that his kingdom was not discernible by any outward marks of power and splendour, such as they expected; nor was it to be preceded by any visible, extraordinary signs to point out his coming. It was to be wholly spiritual, invisible and interior. But this empire of Christ within us is not the less real because it is concealed from human view; it extends itself over the whole man, both as to soul and body; its throne is the heart or will of man; its sovereign law is love and charity; its orders or commands are the efficacious graces and inspirations of the Holy Ghost: its subjects are the several powers of the soul, particularly our understanding, our will, and our corporeal senses; the war that is carried on in this empire is betwixt our passions and our reason, the service required of us is the performance of good works, the rebellions that arise in it are our several temptations and sins; and lastly, the total overthrow of the state, is an entire apostacy from the law and service of God.

Jesus then "said to his disciples," in order to engage them to profit now of their present happiness in possessing him, "the days will come when you shall desire to see one day of the Son of man," such as you now enjoy, "and you shall not see it. And they will say to you; see here" the Messiah, "and see there; but go ye not after nor follow them; for as lightning flashing" suddenly "from under one part of the heavens, shineth" instantly "on those things that are under the heavens: so shall the coming of the Son of Man be in his day;" he will come suddenly with a splendour and majesty that will surprise the whole world. "But first he must suffer many things, and be rejected by this" blind "generation,"* and the passion and death he will undergo as to his natural body, is a presage of the passion or severe trial which his mystical body, the Church, will have likewise to undergo in the last age of the world.

* What follows in St. Luke occurs likewise in St. Matt. xxiv. 37, and as if pronounced in a different place and on a different occasion. St. Luke probably anticipates it, as being somewhat connected with what he had before mentioned. It must likewise be observed, that Christ might repeat the same thing on different occasions.

CHAPTER CI.

JESUS EXHORTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO ENTER IN AT THE NARROW GATE. LUKE XIII.

JESUS was yet in Perea,* which with respect to Judea, is situated on the other side of the Jordan. "And he went through the cities and towns, teaching and making his journey towards Jerusalem: and a certain man said to him: Lord, are they few that are saved?" Jesus gave no precise answer to this question, which was rather curious than useful; "but he said to them" that accompanied him on this occasion, "Strive to enter by the narrow gate:† for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able," because they seek not in good earnest, and never sincerely renounce their evil inclinations and passions. "But when the Master of the house shall have entered into" his heavenly mansions, "and shall shut to the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us. And he answering, shall say to you: I know not whence you are. Then you shall begin to say: we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets, And he shall say to you: I know not whence you are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out," though their natural descendants and the presumptive heirs of the same heavenly kingdom, inasmuch as you are the lawful successors to that holy land of promise which was a figure or representation of the celestial mansions. "And there shall come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south: and they shall sit down in the kingdom of God," whilst you, who are, as it were, the natural heirs, shall be for ever excluded. "And behold they that are" now "last," to wit, the uncircumcised Gentiles, "shall be first, and they" who "are first" now "shall be last:" he speaks of the Jews as being the people of God, and insinuates that the most illustrious among them, such as the Pharisees, the doctors of the law, and the priests, would be cast out amongst the reprobate. All this, though directly addressed to the Jewish people, is no less applicable to such Christians as, by their wicked and unprofitable lives, merit an exclusion from heaven. These indeed may, in their own behalf, remonstrate to Jesus Christ that they

* Perea is derived from the Greek word *peran, beyond*, and signifies the country beyond Jordan, or on the east side of the river. It was bounded, according to Josephus, to the west by Jordan, to the east by Philadelphia, to the north by Pella, and to the south by Macheron, and was a fruitful country.

† By this narrow gate he means that we must lead a life conformable to the gospel, which points out our respective duties and restrains within proper limits our natural and depraved inclinations.

have eaten and drunk at his table, by having partaken of the adorable sacrament of his body and blood, and that they have been hearers of his divine discourses, when his holy word has been announced to them by ministers duly sent by him for their instruction. But they will doubtless have no better success to look for from this their fruitless remonstrance, than what the Jews are here taught to expect, if, like them they neglect the essential duties of that holy religion which Christ came to establish upon earth.

"The same day there came" to Jesus "some of the Pharisees, saying to him: depart and get thee from hence; for Herod has a mind to kill thee." It is probable that these Pharisees, being irritated against Jesus on account of the severe censures which he had levelled against their wicked lives, had solicited this prince thus cruelly to enforce his authority against a person otherwise indifferent to him, as appears from the inactive part he afterwards took during his passion, when Jesus being brought before him, he showed not the least desire of accelerating his death. From the answer which Jesus gave to this message, it appears that Herod condescended merely to the importunity of the Pharisees, in allowing them to make use of his name and authority, in order to intimidate and expel him from his dominions.

When this peremptory message was brought to Jesus, "he said to them: go and tell that fox,* behold I cast out devils, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow,* and the third day I am consummated"† by death. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following," till I arrive at Jerusalem: "because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."‡

From the topic of his approaching death, Jesus takes occasion to reproach the city of Jerusalem with its ingratitude, and to denounce against it the most dreadful menaces. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee! how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings, § and thou wouldst not? Behold," in punishment of your ingratitude in rejecting me, "your house shall be left to you desolate," and abandoned by the Almighty, and so even to the end; "and I say to you, that you shall not see me till the time come, when you" shall own me to be the Messiah, and "shall say: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." ‖

* Jesus here describes Herod under the title of *fox*, an animal remarkable both for cunning and timidity, two characters very distinguishable in that prince.

* That is, for a short time.

† In like manner, when we are in the way of our duty, we ought to fear nothing.

‡ Not that all the prophets suffered in Jerusalem, though many did; and it is rather a prophecy, that he himself, the great Prophet and their Messiah, should be put to death at Jerusalem.

§ It appears that Christ said this on two different occasions; here as mentioned by St. Luke, in Perea, and again after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, as we find in St. Matt. xxiii. 37.

‖ This prophecy cannot solely be referred to Christ's public entry into Jerusalem, when the people made the air ring with these words of the 117th Ps. because previous to this event he was at Bethania, and was there seen by many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had come to meet him.

CHAPTER CII.

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS TO LIFE, AFTER HE HAD BEEN DEAD FOUR DAYS. JOHN XI.

AT the same time that Herod sent an order for Jesus to quit his dominions, a subject of a particular nature recalled him into Judea. For "there was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair; whose brother Lazarus was sick.)" St. John gives so exact and minute a detail of this transaction, as to stamp the most evident marks of truth on every part of his narration. He states, 1. The reality of Lazarus's death, as he had been dead four days. 2. The incontestable miracle of his being raised again to life, to the full conviction of all present. "His sisters therefore sent to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them: this sickness is not unto death," because ultimately to terminate in life: "but" is ordained "for the glory of God," viz. that "the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus;" which observation is made by the evangelist, lest the delay of his journey should be imputed to any motive of indifference or disregard on the part of Jesus. "Having therefore heard that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days," as it were to allow time for the fatal event of his death to take place, or rather that after his death had actually happened, he might have an opportunity of working a miracle even of greater magnitude than that which was required at his hands. "And after that, he said to his disciples: let us go into Judea again.* The disciples replied: Rabbi, but just now the Jews sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered: are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day time, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: but if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not with him."† By this metaphorical language he gave them to understand, that the time of his life was regulated by his Father, and that till night, that is, till the hour of his death was come, he had nothing to apprehend from his enemies. "These things he spoke, and afterwards said to them: Lazarus, our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep," intimating that he could as easily raise him from

* It hence appears that Jesus, after the feast of the Dedication, chap. 89, retired from Judea, and that these words, *beyond the Jordan*, are to be understood relatively to Judea, and not with respect to Galilee.

† Life is of no account to him who thinks of nothing so much as doing the will of God.

the dead, as wake him out of sleep. "His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep he will be safe," considering this as a favourable symptom of his recovery. "But Jesus spoke of his death: and they thought that he spoke of his" natural "rest by sleeping. Then Jesus said to them in plain terms: Lazarus is dead: and I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that" seeing the miracle which I am going to perform, by raising him to life, "you may believe" more firmly that I am the Son of God: "but let us go to him" without further delay. "Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus," seeing that his brethren showed no inclination to obey this proposal, "said to his fellow-disciples" with a fortitude of mind worthy of himself and of every follower of Jesus Christ: "let us also go that we may die with him. Jesus therefore came and found," upon his arrival in Bethania, "that he had been four days already in the monument. (Now Bethania * was near to Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off), that is, about two miles east of it. "And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Providence likewise seemed purposely to have directed them thither with a view to their being witnesses of the wonderful event about to take place. "Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was come went to meet him, but Mary sat at home," paying due attention to her compassionate visitors. "Martha then said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Which words do not imply any want of faith or confidence in Jesus, but express merely her harmless sensibility in lamenting that her brother's sickness had most unseasonably happened at a time when he was far distant: hence she added: "but now also I know, that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee. Jesus saith to her: thy brother shall rise again: Martha" observing, that no precise time was mentioned for this, whether it should be now or only at the general resurrection, dared not to interpret this promise as if immediately to take place, and therefore "saith to him: I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus" now explained to her in what manner the event was to happen; but previously he required of her a distinct profession of faith, that he was the source and author of the general resurrection as to the bodies of mankind, as well as of eternal life with respect to their souls; and he "said to her: I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead shall live. And every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever;" speaking not of that corporeal or transitory death which her brother, though his faithful follower, had experienced, but of the eternal death of the soul. He then asked Martha: "believest thou this? She," breaking out into an act of perfect faith, "saith to him: yes, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." In

* According to Mr. Maundrell, it is at present but a very small village. At the first entrance into it there is an old ruin, which they call Lazarus's castle, supposed to have been the mansion-house where he and his sisters lived. At the bottom of a small descent, not far from the castle, you see his sepulchre, which the Turks hold in great veneration.

this act of faith was comprised a full assent to every other article: but as yet she received no positive assurance of the speedy resurrection of her brother to life. "And having said these words, she went and called her sister Mary privately, saying: the Master is come and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard this, she rose up quickly, and cometh to him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town; but he was still in that place where Martha had met him:" for to obviate every suspicion of collusion respecting Lazarus, he chose that the Jews should be witnesses of his entrance into Bethania, and of every part of the ensuing transaction. "The Jews therefore who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw that Mary rose up speedily, and went out, followed her, saying: she goeth to the monument to weep there;" for this was the custom of those times. "Mary then, when she was come where Jesus was, seeing him, fell down at his feet, and saith to him: Lord, hadst thou been here, my brother had not died.* Jesus therefore, when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, groaned in spirit, and troubled himself;" for as Christ was truly man, he had the affections and passions of human nature; yet so that he was master even of the first motions, which could not raise in him any involuntary disturbance or disorderly inclinations.† He permitted therefore, or rather as it is said, raised within himself these affections of grief and compassion in common with all present on this occasion, "and said: where have you laid him? They answer, come, Lord, and see; and Jesus wept:" thus giving them a mark of his human nature, when he was going to give them a proof of his divinity. "The Jews therefore said: behold how he loved him! But some of them said: could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die?" This their remark could only proceed from an absolute conviction of his being dead, and the impossibility of his being now raised to life. "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the sepulchre; now it was a vault" excavated in the earth, "and a stone was laid over it.* Jesus saith: take away the stone; Martha, the sister of him that was dead," imagining that he sought only to soothe his feelings, by taking a last farewell of the remains of his beloved friend, remonstrated, and "saith to him: Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he has been four days. Jesus saith to her; did not I say to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? They took therefore the stone away" from the place where the dead was laid, "and Jesus lifting up his eyes, said: Father,

* Lazarus, according to St. Epiphanius (Hær. 63.) was now thirty years old, and lived other thirty after being restored to life by Christ.

† Ubi enim summa potestas est, secundum voluntatis nutum tractatur infirmitas. Aug. Trac. 49. in Joan. Turbaris tu nolens turbatus est Christus, quia voluit, &c.

* The common form of a burial place among the ancient Jews was a vault hewn out of a rock, six cubits long and four broad, in which eight other little *cells* or niches (or, as some say, thirteen) were usually made as so many distinct receptacles for the bodies that were to be laid in them. The mouth or entrance of this vault was closed with a large stone, which, whenever they buried any, was removed; and our Saviour here ordered the removal of that which lay upon Lazarus, to make the miracle appear the more evident, because it would have looked more like an apparition than a resurrection, had Lazarus come forth when the door of his sepulchre was so firmly shut.

I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou dost always hear me, but because of the people who stand about have I said it; that they may believe that thou hast sent me" into the world. "When he had said these words, he cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin; Jesus said to them loose him, and let him go.* Many therefore of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the" extraordinary "things that Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them," remaining obstinate in their incredulity and perverse dispositions, "went" in haste "to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done." †

The holy fathers consider this resurrection of Lazarus as a figure of the spiritual resurrection of a soul from the state of sin. Jesus Christ approaches the sinner by his holy word; he excites in him a sincere regret of his past sins; he animates him with a strong purpose of amendment, by the infusion of his holy spirit; he unbinds him by the power which he has given to the ministers of his holy Church, and bids him go to lead a new life. Such is the wonderful work which the Saviour of our souls produceth in the order of grace. The tears, the sighs, the groans and prayer of Jesus Christ at the tomb of Lazarus, indicate the difficulty there is in resuscitating a soul that has long been dead by a habit of mortal sin. But however great the difficulty may be, the sinner who is desirous of life, and willing to concur, ought never to despair, when he considers the power of his Physician, and the goodness of his Redeemer.

* St. Austin (Ser. 44 da verbis Don.) and St. Greg. (Hom. 26. in Evang.) consider Lazarus here as an emblem or figure of a sinner, who is indeed spiritually restored to life by contrition, but still to be loosed from the bands of his guilt by the absolution of Christ's ministers.

† Jesus wrought this miracle, as it were at the very gates of Jerusalem, reserving it for the last, purposely to take away every shadow of excuse from the Jews. For its public notoriety left not the smallest handle to their usual chicane or cavilling, by which they had endeavoured to explain away his former miracles.

CHAPTER CIII.

THE FIRST COUNCIL HELD BY THE PHARISEES AGAINST JESUS. JOHN XI. LUKE IX.

"THE chief priests therefore, and the Pharisees," were no sooner informed of the wonderful resurrection of Lazarus, than they "gathered a council," consisting of seventy-two persons, "and said to one another: "what are we a doing?" why are we so slow and remiss in our proceedings, "for this man doth many miracles?* If we let him go, all will believe in him," as their expected king and Messiah, "and the Romans," supposing that we are setting up a king in opposition to them, "will come and take away our place and nation." These were the reasons of policy which in-

* This is a dreadful instance of the effect of prejudice obstinacy, malice, &c.

duced them to get rid of Jesus, and they were in fact real prophecies of what was to happen to them in consequence of putting him to death.

From the following decision of Caiphas, it appears that some few declared themselves in favour of Jesus; at least it is not to be doubted that Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, espoused his cause; they probably urged in his favour, that he was void of ambition, that the power he had repeatedly shewn, bespoke its divine origin, and that he had ever made the public good his primary object and concern; moreover they would urge, that if these arguments were not admitted, his adversaries must at least place in the scales, the innocence of his life and manners, and his being unaccused of any crime; and that to condemn him to death without proof of guilt, would of itself be the greatest of crimes. "But one of them, named Caiphas, being the high priest that year," who had therefore to collect the votes of the council, opposed every argument urged in favour of Jesus, and "said to them: you know nothing" of the real state of the case, "neither do you consider, that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*

These words of Caiphas had a double meaning; one, in the intention of Caiphas, which was wicked and abominable, as implying that the safety of the commonwealth was to be secured even by means the most unjust and unwarrantable, such as the shedding of innocent blood; and another, designed by the Holy Ghost, which was divine and prophetic, as implying that it was highly advantageous that one man should suffer death, in order to redeem all mankind from eternal perdition. "And" in "this" sense "he spoke not of himself; but being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation" of the Jews. "And not only for" this "nation, but to gather together into one" body "the children of God, that were dispersed" through the world. "From that day, therefore they devised" how "to put him to death. Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but he went into a country near the desert, into a city that is called Ephrem;" but in the Greek it is called Ephraim,* which some think to be Ephron, in the tribe of Juda, while others, with greater probability, place it in the tribe of Ephraim, about twenty miles to the north of Jerusalem; "and there he abode" for some space of time, "with his disciples." This example of Jesus, in withdrawing from persecution, has been a sanction to the faithful in all succeeding ages, to consult their safety by flight in times of danger and persecution. "And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves"† from such legal impurities as they might

* Vide quanta sit virtus spiritus sancti. A mente malâ roluit verba proferri prophetica. St. Chrysos. 64. in Joan. Hence it follows, that Caiphas was not strictly and truly a prophet, because, as St. Thomas observes, the Holy Ghost did not enlighten his understanding or influence his will, but solely directed his tongue.

* Ephrem is found in some Greek copies, as likewise in Nonus.

† Much more ought Christians to purify themselves before the Christian Passover: this should be the chief business of Lent.

have contracted. Of the several species of these impurities, there were some which rendered persons unclean during eight days, and which therefore, had they not duly purified themselves, would have prevented their partaking of the paschal lamb until the succeeding month, agreeably to what Moses ordained.* Many of these persons were greatly attached to Jesus, and "they sought therefore for" him, "and discoursed one with another, standing in the temple: What think you" can have prevented him, "that he is not come to the festival-day? And the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders, that if any one should know where he was, he should give notice, that they might apprehend him. And it came to pass, when the days of his assumption"† out of this world "were accomplishing, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," viewing with an undaunted courage that death which he foresaw there awaited him. "And he sent Messengers before him" into those places through which he was to pass, "and going they entered into a city of the Samaritans to prepare" the necessaries of life "for him" and his followers. "But they received them not, because his face was" evidently "of one going to Jerusalem," for the celebration of the Passover; which they considered as a high affront offered to their temple upon Mount Garisem, where they imagined the feasts and ceremonies of religion ought to be performed instead of Jerusalem. "And when his disciples, James and John, had seen this" inhospitable treatment, they resented it more than the others, and "they said: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them," in a manner similar to that of Elias * when he punished the soldiers of the king of Israel? "And turning about he rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are," and that the spirit of the gospel, which you ought to follow, is the spirit of mercy, mildness, and forbearance. "The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save" them. "And they went into another town," which afforded them a more humane and hospitable reception.

CHAPTER CIV.

JESUS, THE THIRD TIME, FORETELLS HIS DEATH†—THE AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE. MATT. XX. MARK X. LUKE XVIII.

WHILST "they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem," their conver-

* Numb. ix. 10.

† We place here what St. Luke has anticipated concerning the rejection of Jesus by the Samaritans. These words, *when the days of his assumption were fulfilled*, indicate that there was no great interval between this journey of Jesus and his death, which was the beginning of what is called his assumption that is, of his return to his Father. Moreover, St. Luke, by these words, *he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*, seems to insinuate the fortitude and alacrity with which he went to suffer death. It must however be acknowledged, that to go to Jerusulem from Ephrem, where Jesus was staying, the direct road is not through Samaria; but our Lord may have had several reasons for not taking the great high road. St. Luke having mentioned two important admonitions of Christ to his disciples, the one against ambition, the other against envy, might perhaps think this a proper occasion for adding a third against revenge, without observing the order of time.

* In the Greek *as Elias did.* This might seem a margi-

sation turned upon two very different topics: the first was the prediction which Jesus made to his Apostles of his approaching sufferings and death; the second was the ambitious request of the two sons of Zebedee. "And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished" at his intrepidity and resolution in thus going into the midst of his enemies: "and following" after him, they "were afraid," and full of apprehensions. "And taking again the twelve disciples apart, he began to tell them the things that should befall him; and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified." Yes, "he shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again" to enter into his glory. "And they understood none of these things," because, like the rest of the Jews, they were fully prepossessed with the idea that the Messiah would be immortal. "The meaning," therefore, "of these words was hid from them, and they did not conceive the things that were spoken." But the motive of Jesus, in delivering this prediction, was to convince them, when, on a future day, they should recollect all that was past, that his passion and death, so far from surprising him unawares, had been ever present before his eyes, and that he had foreseen and foretold to them the most material circumstances concerning it.

"Then came to him" Salome, "the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with her sons, adoring him upon her knees, "and asking something of him;" for as they had heard Jesus mention his resurrection they judged that his reign was at hand, and were therefore ambitious of securing to themselves the first dignities in his kingdom. "Who said to her: What wilt thou? She* saith to him: say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom. And Jesus" without taking notice of the mother, who made this request in behalf of her sons, "answering, said to them: You know not what you ask." In effect, carried away by a spirit of ambition, they erroneously figured to themselves some high and lucrative post in an earthly or temporal kingdom, and this at a time when they should have been preparing themselves for conflicts and battles, after the example of their Lord and Master now going to a disgraceful cross. Jesus, therefore, adverting to his sufferings, said to them: "Can you drink the chalice† that I shall drink? or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?

nal note introduced into the text, if not supported by the Arabic and Syriac, as also by Tertullian, who must have thus read it, as appears from his answer to Marcion, who objected this passage.

† See the first prediction, chap. 66. No 3. the second, chap. 69. No. 1.

* In St. Mark x. 35. we find that the sons themselves made this petition. Both the sons and the mother might take it, at least the sons may be said to have done what they desired their mother to do for them, and hence Christ directed his answer to them. A similar way of speaking occurs in the history of the centurion, chap. 45.

† The cup or chalice is a metaphor signifying Christ's sufferings and death. See Ps. x. 17. lxxiv. 9. Isai. li. 17.

But they said to him," without fully comprehending the import of his words : " We can. And Jesus saith to them : You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of, and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized, you shall be baptized.* But to sit on my right hand or on my left, is not mine," as man, " to give to you," especially whilst in these dispositions of pride and ambition ; " but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father. And the" other "ten" apostles " hearing it, were moved with indignation against the two brethren James and John. But Jesus called them to him," and explained the true nature of those dignities and offices of his kingdom, which they had erroneously conceived to be of a temporal nature, assuring them that there was a wide difference betwixt the dignities of his kingdom and those of this world, both in regard to the persons enjoying these dignities and the use which they made of their authority. " And he said : You know, that the princes of the Gentiles† lord it over them," in an arbitrary and despotic manner, " and they who are greater, exercise power over them," their chief law being their own will. " It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister," because he is to consider the salvation of his brethren as the sole end of his actions. " And whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all," and as such must make his will and desires bend to the spiritual necessities of others. Jesus then enforces this doctrine by his own example : " For even the Son of Man," says he, though greater than all the kings of the earth, " is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a

* St. James was the first apostle that suffered martyrdom at Jerusalem, Acts xii. 2, and St. John was put into a caldron of boiling oil and banished into Patmos.

† Although Christ condemns here the *tyrannical abuse* of power, yet no inference can be justly drawn from his words against the due exercise of power, either in church or state. To be convinced of this, in opposition to the levelling system of modern times, we need only to consider the nature and foundation both of civil and ecclesiastical dominion. It is obvious that civil society cannot subsist without civil government ; the end of which is to provide for the public good and the security of each individual. For what is civil society, but an association of mankind under some government for the sake of public tranquility and of public happiness? What is anarchy, but the vice opposite to civil society—a want of order, a state without a magistracy? Before the establishment of civil government, man might pretend to the enjoyment of a savage, wild kind of liberty—a liberty without security, without property, without any certain dominion. But in such a state of nature it is evident that mankind must live in a constant state of warfare, each one claiming or contesting whatever he pleases : for reason here is of no avail, as every one calls his own passion or inclination the right of nature and of reason, consequently every thing, in such a state, must be unsettled, changeable, and determined only by force. Nor does force give any permanent security, since he who is strongest to-day may to-morrow be obliged to yield to superior power. Hence arises the necessity of man's entering into society, and of submitting to some kind of civil government ; and in proportion to this necessity, is every person obliged to obey the supreme power of the state, whatever may be the established form of its government. Religion being the friend of order, instead of destroying, most powerfully confirms this law of nature, and teaches that submission is due to the constituted powers of every lawful government. In establishing Christianity our Saviour made no alteration in the constitution of civil society ; he left the *Christian* magistrate in possession of his temporal power—still *bearing the sword* for the punishment of *evil-doers*, and for the defence of those *who do well*. Hence the apostle declares, (Rom.xiii. 2.) that civil government is the *ordinance of God*, and that *they who resist it purchase to themselves damnation*. *Ecclesiastical* dominion is no less agreeable both to reason and revelation. It is indeed obvious, that a church cannot subsist without ecclesiastical government, any more than civil society without civil government. Hence, among the gifts distributed for the use of the Church, we find that mention is made of *governments*, (1 Cor. xii. 28.) and of *those who are set over us in the Lord*, (1 Thess. v. 12.) to whom we must yield *obedience* and submit ourselves. (Heb. xiii. 7. 17.) Hence we read that the apostles had the *rod* (1 Cor. iv. 21.) and power *given by the Lord to deliver to Satan* (1 Cor. v. 5.) and revenge *all disobedience*, (2 Cor. x. 6.) We must not however imagine, that the *civil* and *ecclesiastical* government are precisely on the same footing, because both are derived from God, or that Christians are perfectly free to choose any kind of church government, and to adapt it to that of the state whether this be monarchic, aristocratic, or democratic. This indeed is the doctrine of Hoadley, Balguy, and others, though certainly repugnant to scripture and contradicted by the practice of all ages. That Christ ap-

redemption for many,"* like to a slave who should sacrifice his own life to save the life of his master.

The holy fathers take occasion, from the example of St. James and St. John, to caution us against ambition and the desire of worldly honours. In effect, if these two apostles, though trained up for three years in the school of Christ, were still infected with this leaven of self-esteem and applause, it is recorded as a warning for us, lest this subtil evil should find its way, with far greater ease, into our unguarded souls. We should ever remember what Christ tells his apostles on this occasion, viz. that we know not what we ask for, when we solicit honours, preferments, and such like temporal goods, which instead of bringing us nearer to our God, are too apt to carry us away from him. Let us first drink with Christ of the chalice of his passion, let us take up our cross and follow him, and thus we shall prove ourselves to be his true disciples, and as such be entitled to sit down with him on his throne, to reign eternally with him in the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER CV.

THE CONVERSION OF ZACHEUS.† MARK X. LUKE XIX.

"And they came to Jericho," followed by an immense concourse of people; "and entering, he walked through" the town. "And behold there was a man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the Publicans,‡ and he was rich." We are here to take notice of three different steps in the conversion of this opulent worldling which deserves our attention. These were, 1. An ardent desire of seeing Jesus; 2. The honourable reception which he gave him in his house; 3. The cheerful and complete restitution which he

pointed in the Christian Church a *certain form* of administration, or *fixed system* of government, cannot be doubted, since we find that he most carefully made this kind of provision, even for the temporary synagogue of the Jews. (See Ex. xl. 13, 14, 15. Numb. xx. 26. iii. 32. Deut. xvii. 12. 2 Chron. xix. 11.) And that this form was *episcopal* the apostle assures us, Acts xx., where speaking of bishops, he says, that they are placed over the Church for the express purpose of governing it. Accordingly we find that wherever the apostles founded churches they ordained bishops to preside in them, that these bishops so ordained, consecrated others, and that thus, during eighteen centuries, they have without any interruption perpetuated themselves down to the present time. The episcopal government therefore is a divine and not a human institution: it derives its authority immediately from God; whereas in the system of Hoadly and other moderns, the meanest officer in the state receives his authority from God equally with those who exercise the most sacred functions of the ecclesiastical ministry. It must likewise be observed that Christ did not trust his apostles with an *equal* share of power for the government of his Church: it was to St. Peter he committed his *whole* flock, both lambs and sheep without exception; it was to him, and his successors, he gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, in order *that a head being appointed, there might be no room for schism*, says St. Jerome, (Cont. Jovin. i. 2.) Such was the established form of government which Christ left to his Church, and such it will always continue to the end of the world. Hence we may infer the greatness of that crime which seeks to overthrow this sacred establishment of Christ. For if rebellion be the highest offence committed against a state, as most certainly it is, since no law can subsist without the authority of magistrates to support it; and the general peace and liberties of a people are evidently endangered when this authority is destroyed; so we may easily judge how grievous must be the crime of *spiritual* rebellion, which resists the authority of church governors, and thus strikes at the ruin of Christ's sacred hierarchy.

* That is for all, in the scripture style. See St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 6.

† As the miracle of the blind man, which St. Luke places before the history of Zacheus, appears to be the same with that mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark, we must conclude that St. Luke anticipates that event. See chap, 107.

‡ Our Lord told us above, how difficult the salvation of the rich is; here he shows how possible their salvation is by his grace. A publican was a farmer of the customs, not a collector, as some falsely imagine; for these were called *portatores*, such as brought them to the farmers.

made of all his ill-acquired property. "Zacheus" having never yet beheld Jesus, "he sought," on this occasion, "to see" him, "who he was; and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature. And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, he saw him, and said to him, Zacheus, make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him with joy. And when all saw it, they murmured, saying, that he was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But Zacheus," who doubtless heard these several murmurs of the people against the choice of Jesus, was desirous of showing that he was not undeserving of the honour conferred upon him, and upon the spot pledged himself to the performance of two acts, the one of a perfect charity, the other of justice and restitution, but in a superior degree, and greatly beyond what could be expected from him. Wherefore, "standing he said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him four fold." There was no obligation of making so superabundant a satisfaction, but Zacheus voluntarily chose to allay the remorse of his conscience by following literally the precept * which required for every sheep stolen the restitution of four others to the injured party. Moreover, as Zacheus could not know the several individuals, whom in the course of his profession he might have wronged, he could no otherwise execute his design than by openly announcing it to the public: which, as on the one hand, it was a severe humiliation to him, so on the other, it exposed him not a little to the almost certain chance of having much more claimed of him than what he really owed. "Jesus," pleased with this perfect and disinterested sacrifice which he now made of his worldly interests which had been hitherto his predominant passion, "said to him: this day is salvation come to this house; because he also is a son of Abraham," and is now become a true imitator of the faith and justice of that holy patriarch. He added, that they were not to be surprised if God granted this favour to a sinner, such as he had been: "For the Son of man," says he, "is come to seek and to save that which was lost" by sin. Hence the greatest sinners need not despair, since God himself seeks to save them.

* Ez. xxii.

CHAPTER CVI.

PARABLE OF A NOBLEMAN, WHO GOING A LONG JOURNEY* LEFT DIFFERENT SUMS OF MONEY IN THE HANDS OF HIS SERVANTS TO TRADE WITH IN HIS ABSENCE. LUKE XIX.

"As they were" attentively "hearing these things," Jesus "added and spoke a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they imagined that the kingdom of God would" there "immediately be manifested" with pomp and splendour. "He said therefore," with the view of rectifying their mistake, and convincing them that their expectations were not to be fulfilled until after a considerable period: "A certain nobleman went into a far country, to take possession of a kingdom,* and" afterwards "to return. And having called ten of his servants, he gave to them ten sums of money,† "and said to them: traffic with them till I come back. But his citizens hated him; and sent a message after him, saying: we will not have this man to reign over us. And it happened that he returned after he had received his kingdom; and he commanded his servants to be called, to whom he had given money, that he might know how much every one had acquired by traffic. Now the first came and said: Lord, thy money hath made ten times as much. And he said to him: well done good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities. And another came and said: Lord thy money hath made five times as much. And to this man he said: be thou also over five cities. And another came and said: behold here thy piece of money, which I have kept laid up in a napkin," for fear of losing it: "for I feared thee, because thou art a severe man; thou takest up what thou didst not lay down, and thou reapest what thou didst not sow. He saith to him; Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou didst know that I am a severe man, taking up what I have not laid down, and reaping what I have not sown. And why didst thou not give my money to the bank, that I at my return might have exacted it with usury? And he said to them that stood by: Take the money from him, and give it to him that hath ten such pieces. And they said to him: Lord he hath ten pieces" already. "But I say to you, that to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound: † but from him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken from him. Now as for

* Jesus speaks to the Jews agreeably to what took place amongst them in his time. Their kings depended on the Romans, and were obliged to go to Rome to receive there the kingdom from the hand of the emperor.

† Each of these pieces was called a *mna*. But I have not translated it *pounds* as others usually do, because as Dr. Witham observes, this gives the reader a false notion, the Roman *mna* not corresponding to that sum, for it was twelve ounces and a half, which according to five shillings the ounce, is three pounds two shillings and sixpence.

* See chap. 96.

† Et abundabit. This word is not in the Greek, but is found in St. Matt. xiii, 12. and xxv. 29.

those my enemies, who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither, and kill them before me. And having spoke these things, he led the way going up to Jerusalem;" for he was impelled by a holy ardour to consummate there his sacrifice for the redemption of the world.

In this parable Jesus represents himself under the character of a person distinguished by his high birth and sovereign dignity, who departs into a far distant country, there to be confirmed in the possession of a newly acquired kingdom. This distant country is no other than heaven, into which Jesus entered at his ascension to take possession of that sovereignty, which he exercises over all creatures, until the period of his return, which will be the day of judgment. Previous to his departure he calls his servants, and divides amongst them sums of money, with a charge to improve them to the best advantage during his absence. By these ten servants are represented the generality of Christians who, independently of this trust or loan, are already engaged in the service of Christ. These sums of money are the various gifts or gratuitous graces, placed in their hands, for the purpose of being employed in the service of God and the good of souls.

Soon after the departure of this prince into a distant country, his servants forgetting the fidelity they owed him, sent a deputation of some of their members to inform him that thenceforwards they renounced him as their sovereign. The truth, here disguised under this figurative embassy, was realized soon after in that persecution which the Jews, the decided enemies of Jesus, raised against his Church immediately on his quitting the world. They loudly proclaimed before Pilate, that they did not acknowledge him for their king, and that they would have no other king than Cæsar: moreover the several martyrs who were put to death by the synagogue, were as so many persons dispatched by them to announce their determination of rejecting Jesus as their Sovereign.

The account demanded by this prince from his servants, as to the treasure intrusted to their care, is no other than the strict reckoning which at the day of judgment will be exacted from all Christians, as to the use which which they have made of God's spiritual treasures and graces. When our Lord shall come to judge mankind, he will then abundantly reward those that shall have employed his gifts in a manner agreeable to his intentions; but he will punish with rigour and justice those who, like the wicked servant, shall have misemployed or abused them. The excuse of this wicked servant for hiding his money in a napkin, viz. the extreme severity of his master in exacting what was his due, is figurative of those idle excuses and pretexts which negligent Christians allege for not complying with the duties and obligations of their holy religion. They may urge in their excuse the severity of Christ's law, which requires from the revengeful the forgiveness of injuries, from the dissolute the practice of continency and chastity, from the rich the exercise of charity and alms-deeds, and from the unjust an exact and perfect restitution of ill-gotten goods. But this very severity of the divine law, instead of being a

cloak for their negligent conduct, should, on the contrary, make them more diligent and fervent in the performance of every Christian duty; otherwise Christ will say to them as he did to the wicked servant; "out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou evil servant: thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up what I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow, and behold! instead of making this deposit to fructify by thy labour and industry, thou hast shamefully buried it in a napkin." The prince condemns this bad servant to lose what had been intrusted in his hands, and orders it to be given to that servant who by his industry had acquired ten times as much: and this decision is founded on the most equitable principles, that he who by his industry and labour has gained something, is well entitled to receive a further reward, whilst on the other hand, he who by his negligence has not that which he ought to have, deserves to have that little taken from him which yet remains in his hands.

The last circumstance recorded in this parable, is the punishment inflicted by this prince upon those rebellious subjects who refused to acknowledge him for their sovereign. He causes them to be put to death in his presence. This is a representation of that eternal death to which the infidel Jews and impious Christians shall be condemned by Jesus Christ at the last day, when in company with devils they will be cast into the abyss of hell, to burn there for all eternity.

CHAPTER CVII.

THE TWO BLIND MEN NEAR JERICHO. MATT XX. MARK X. LUKE XVIII.

On the following day, "as" Jesus "went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a very great multitude, Bartimeus the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the wayside begging," in company with another person who laboured under a similar misfortune. St. Mark and St. Luke speak only of one of them, named Bartimeus, as being the most noted, but St. Matthew mentions both. That the three Evangelists relate the same miracle, appears from the circumstances agreeing together. We have given the narration of St. Mark and St. Luke in relation only to Bartimeus, it being more circumstantial than that of St. Matthew.* We may admire on this occasion, 1. The

* They who pretend that the history given by St. Luke, chap. 18, is different from that of the other Evangelists, ground their opinion only on this, that according to St. Luke, Jesus was drawing near to Jericho, whereas according to St. Matthew and St. Mark, he was going out of Jericho. Some reconcile this by saying, that St. Luke marks the place where the blind man first began to cry out, and that his cure being delayed, he again put himself, with another blind man, in the way of Jesus, who called and healed both. Others with great probability, make answer, that the word *eggizein appropinquare*, or *to draw nigh*, even with the preposition *eis* does not always imply motion to a place, but frequently only distance, and that therefore it might be translated, *when he was near Jericho*, or *on the confines of Jericho*, and it is in this sense the Evangelist makes use of the word in the following chap. xix. ver. 29. (of this history 109.) *os eggisen eis* cum appropinquaret ad Bethphage et Bethaniam, that is, when he was near to those places, for he had already passed Bethania. Theophylactus, Maldonatus, A. Lapide, &c. agree with us, that the Evangelists speak of the same history.

great faith of these blind men. 2. Their firmness and constancy. 3. Their gratitude towards their benefactor. "And when" Bartimeus "heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant, and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by: who, when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out, and to say: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him," alleging that Jesus was yet at a distance, and that it was needless for him thus to tire himself and the passengers with his incessant noise. And many of the succeeding crowd "charged him" likewise "to hold his peace." But he was loath to believe implicitly what they said, and being apprehensive lest Jesus should pass by without taking notice of him in his misery, "he cried a great deal the more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing still, commanded him to be called, and to be brought to him. And they call the blind man, saying to him: be easy, take courage; arise, he calleth thee. Who, casting off his garment, leaped up, and came to him. And when he was come near, Jesus asked him, saying: what wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus" full of compassion, "said to him: receive thy sight: go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him in the way, glorifying God. And all the people" likewise "when they saw it, gave praise to God."

In this blind man we behold an image of that spiritual blindness which is caused by sin, and which is a far more deplorable evil than corporeal blindness. Unfortunately, however, it is but little noticed or apprehended by the generality of mankind. Let a person lose the eyes of his body, says St. Austin, and all bewail his misfortune; but provided he abound in worldly riches and pleasures, he may lose the spiritual eye-sight of his soul, and be nevertheless esteemed and envied as if he were the happiest of men. If, however, we judge of things according to the infallible word of God, we shall consider the inward blindness of a sinner to be a much greater evil than any exterior blindness that can befall him; this last is only a privation of the light of day, and the other is a privation of the light of grace and of glory. The light of this world is indeed grateful and pleasant to behold; but though a great blessing, it is only what we have in common with the brute creation; it serves only to distinguish material objects. But the light which Christ communicates to the soul, enables us to know God and his sacred truths, to discern good from evil, and to distinguish the way of salvation from that of damnation; in short, it is this light which elevates us above all inferior creatures, which dissipates the spiritual darkness caused by sin and our unruly passions, and which alone can bring us to the true light of eternal glory.

CHAPTER CVIII.

THE SECOND * ANOINTING OF THE FEET OF JESUS .* MATT. XXVI. MARK XIV. JOHN XI. AND XII.

Whilst Jesus was in retirement at Ephraim, "the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders, that if any man knew where he was he should give notice, that they might apprehend him." Jesus was fully aware of this, and to save them the trouble of a further search, he now voluntarily threw himself in their way, and thereby placed it in their power to execute, if they durst, their evil designs against him. "Jesus therefore, six days before the Passover," that is, on the Saturday,† "came to Bethania, where Lazarus was, he that had been dead, whom Jesus raised to life. And they made him a supper there, in the house of Simon the leper. And Martha served" on this occasion, as was her usual manner: but Lazarus was one of them that were at table with him," and thus gave sufficient proofs as to the reality of his being raised to life. "Mary therefore," to contribute her share to the honour and respect shown to Jesus on this occasion, "took a pound of ointment of right spikenard,‡ of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and" this she did after having previously wiped his feet with her hair. And "breaking the alabaster box," either from a desire of employing every drop of the perfume in this laudable purpose, or else to avoid loss of time, "she poured it on his head as he was at table. And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

Various reasons may be alleged as influencing Mary in this action, of which some are natural, others mysterious or prophetical. Of the former kind are, 1. The ardent love which she entertained for Jesus, for whose sake she would have sacrificed not only the most costly perfumes, but even her very life. 2. Her gratitude for the favours conferred upon her by Jesus, as likewise upon her brother Lazarus, whom he had raised to life after having been buried during four days

* See the first, chap. 48.

† Some interpreters, with Cajetan, Jansenius, and others, are of opinion that Christ came to Bethania on the Friday, referring the *Passover* of which St. John speaks to Thursday evening: but we have followed the opinion of St. Thomas. Theophylactus, Rupertus, &c. which is more agreeable to the context, and to the series of Christ's transactions. For it is more probable that St. John, by the Passover means, as usual, the festival day of the Passover which that year fell on the Friday. Moreover, John says, chap. xii. ver. 12. that Christ, on the following day, went to Jerusalem riding on an ass: now as this happened on a Sunday, he must have come to Bethania on the Sabbath-day.

‡ That is ex *spicis* nardi, which was held in the highest estimation amongst the Jews. St. Mark and St John, in the Greek have *pistikes* which some will have to be the same as *spikates*. This *nard*, or spikenard, is a plant that grows in the Indies, with a very slender root, a stalk small and long, and several ears or *spikes* even with the ground, from whence it has the name of spikenard. The Indian *nard*, if true and genuine, must be of a *yellowish* colour, inclining towards *purple*, with long spikes, and the bristles of its spikes large and odoriferous. Of the blade or spike of this nard, the ancients were used to make a perfume of great esteem and value.

* The place, the time, the kind of perfume, the murmuring of the Apostles, and their correction by Jesus, make it highly probable that the three Evangelists speak of the same supper, and of the same anointing. St. Matthew and St. Mark, as St. Austin observes, do not relate this in due order of time, but afterwards recapitulate it, in order to assign a cause for the treachery of Judas, viz. his indignation at not having been able to avail himself of the value of this perfume. St. John places this history in its proper order, and, as usual, adds some circumstances omitted by others as the name of the woman, who was called Mary, sister of Lazarus. See chap. 48 and 56.

3. Her religious worship of Jesus, whom she firmly believed to be the only Son of God and the Saviour of the world. It was to tender him the supreme homage of her adoration, that prostrate at his feet she offered the sacrifice of her perfumes, an offering which was far more pleasing to him on account of the devotion which accompanied it, than for the fragrancy which it diffused through the whole house.

The mysterious or prophetical reasons above alluded to, will appear in the sequel from the words of Christ, where he justifies the conduct of Mary. "And the disciples," being present on this occasion, and "seeing" what was done "were angry, and said: why was this waste of the ointment made? for this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence," nearly equivalent to nine guineas, "and given to the poor: and they murmured against her," * especially "one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot," Simon's son, "he that was about to betray him;" and he "said: why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because" in fact "he was a thief," and so under the cloak of a pretended zeal for them, was pleading the cause of his own avarice; "for having the purse, he carried the things that were put therein," and thus wished for an opportunity of secreting a part to his own private use. Mary, we may imagine, was not a little perplexed at the blame thus cast upon her; yet she chose to place her cause in the hands of Jesus, to whom in fact it belonged, since by allowing the perfume to be thus used upon his person, he had tacitly approved of the action itself. Wherefore, "Jesus knowing" the murmurs of his disciples, "said to them: why do you trouble this woman? Let her alone" in the use of this precious ointment, "that she may keep it against the day of my burial;" * intimating hereby, that in this action, she had in view to perform towards him the last offices of her esteem and affection. "She hath," says Christ, "wrought a good work upon me; for the poor you have always with you, and whensoever you will you may do them good, but me you have not always. What she had" in her power, "she hath done" for me. "For in pouring this ointment upon my body, she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial," and to render me an honour during life which she will not have an opportunity of showing me after death.† "Amen I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in

* It may be said, that several were filled with indignation on this occasion, but chiefly Judas, for the reason assigned by St. John; hence, in the context we have placed both the words of St. Mark and St. John, though not without some repetition. However it is more probable, upon the whole, that Judas alone remonstrated in a clamorous manner against this profusion of ointment, as mentioned by St. John, and that St. Matthew and St. Mark attribute to the disciples in general what was done in fact only by one of them, by a figure called *synecdochen*, as when it is said that the thieves on the cross blasphemed against Jesus, which may be understood only of one of them.

* In most Greek copies it is *eis ten emeran to entaphiasmo mo tetereken auto*, she hath reserved this for the day of my burial. Other copies agree with the Latin. It was a custom in these eastern countries for the bodies of kings and great persons to be embalmed at their funerals with odours and sweet perfumes; and in allusion to it, our Saviour here declares of Mary, that to testify her faith in him as her King and Lord, she had, as it were, beforehand embalmed his body with precious ointment for his burial.

† This is the reason full of mystery which caused Mary to embalm the body of Jesus beforehand in the manner she had now done. For the Holy Ghost inspired her thus to perform this pious office towards him in his lifetime, which, on account of his resurrection, he knew would be impossible for her to execute after his death.

the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her" respect towards my person, highly redounding to her honour. Of this prophecy we witness the accomplishment whenever we hear this portion of the gospel read at the mass. As Jesus remained in Bethania during the Sabbath-day, "a great multitude of the Jews knew that he was there," and hastened to him: "but they came not for Jesus's sake only, but" from a motive of curiosity, "that they might see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead."

This wonderful miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, so well attested as to all its circumstances, was proof against all the calumnies of the chief priests. As they could not invalidate it by alleging either natural causes, the violation of the Sabbath, the uncertainty of the fact, or any other objection, hence their censorious disposition was, in this instance, completely disarmed. The very appearance of Lazarus amounted to a demonstration that Jesus was the Son of God: and hence many were induced to desert the party of Pharisees, to attach themselves to him. In hopes, therefore, of blotting out all traces of an event so prejudicial to their cause, "the chief priests consulted how to kill Lazarus, because many of the Jews, on his account went off, and believed in Jesus." But the Almighty allowed them not to execute their design, which was as foolish as it was wicked: for if Christ could raise him to life from a natural death, says St. Austin, he could surely, with equal ease, have restored him to life when murdered by them. It is an ancient tradition, as we have already remarked, that Lazarus lived thirty years after our Saviour's death.

CHAPTER CIX.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS INTO JERUSALEM. MATT. XXI. MARK XI. LUKE XIX. JOHN XII.

"AND on the following day," viz. the first day of the week, which answers to our Sunday, Jesus departed from Bethania together with his disciples, to make his solemn entry into Jerusalem in quality of the Messiah. And as in order to fulfil the ancient figures, he chose that very night for the institution of the passover of the new law, which was set aside for the immolation of the paschal lamb in the old law, and that very day for the redemption of the world, in which God's people had formerly been redeemed from their Egyptian bondage, so was he also pleased to make his entry into Jerusalem, in order to his sacrifice, on the very day on which by the appointment of the law* the lamb was brought there to be sacrificed at the passover. Of this scene the chief priests and the Pharisees would undoubtedly be spectators. "When they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to" the mid-way between

* Exod. xii. 3.



Street in Jerusalem.

Bethania (which he had just quitted) and "Bethphage,"* a small village of the priests at the foot of "the mountain called of Olives,"† towards the east, "then Jesus sends two of his disciples," probably Peter and John. "and saith to them: Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming in thither you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her upon which no man hath yet sat.‡ Loose them and bring them to me; and if any man shall ask you: Why do you loose him? Say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" Zachary, "saying: tell ye the daughter of Sion: behold, thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke."

The daughter of Sion here spoken of is the city of Jerusalem, and she is informed that her king, her expected Messiah, would come to her in a style widely different from that of earthly kings. They are proud and haughty, whilst he, on the contrary, is full of meekness; they treat their subjects with harshness and severity, he rules his people with equal goodness and justice; they are carried about in the most magnificent vehicles, he is mounted on an ass, the emblem of mildness and simplicity; the rest of his equipage in every respect corresponds with the meanness of the animal he rides upon. "And the disciples going did as Jesus commanded them. And going their way they found the" ass and "colt tied before the gate without at the meeting of two ways, and they loosed him. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said to them: What are you doing to loose the colt? Who said to them, as Jesus had commanded them, because the Lord hath need of them, and they let him go with them. And they brought the ass and the colt to Jesus. And they lay their garments on" the back of the young ass, as a species of saddle, and having thus rendered the riding upon it more commodious and becoming, "they made him sit thereon."

But however mean and humble the equipage of Jesus was in this his entry, yet nothing could be more glorious than the reception which he met with from the people. It was far superior

* See note on chap. 107. They had quitted Bethania, where Jesus had lodged the preceding day, but were not arrived at Bethphage: this name signifies the house of figs and dates, and was probably called so from the several kinds of these trees that grew there.

† This place, doubtless, had its name from the great number of olive-trees that grew upon it. It lay a little without Jerusalem, on the east side, about five furlongs from the city, says Josephus, but he must be understood of the very nearest part of it, since St. Luke makes the distance to be a Sabbath day's journey, that is, eight furlongs, or a mile, unless we suppose he means the summit of the hill from which our Saviour ascended, Acts i. 12. Mr. Maundrell tells us, that he and his company going out of Jerusalem at St. Stephens's gate, and crossing, the valley of Josaphat, began immediately to ascend the mountain; that being about two-thirds of the way up, they came to certain grottos cut with intricate windings and caverns under ground, which were called the *Sepulchres of the Prophets*, that a little higher up were twelve arched vaults under ground, standing side by side, and built in memory of the apostles who are said to have compiled their creed in this place; that sixty paces higher they came to the place where Christ is said to have uttered his prophecy concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem; and a little on the right hand to another, where he is said to have dictated, a second time, the Lord's Prayer to his disciples; that somewhat higher is the cave of a saint called Pelagia; a little below that, a pillar denoting the place where an angel gave the Blessed Virgin three days warning of her death, and at the top of all the place of our Blessed Lord's ascension. See chap. 150. in the note.

‡ This colt which had never been used, represented the people of the Gentiles, to whom God had not given a written law, as he had to the Jews. St. Jerome reprobates, without sufficient reason, the opinion of those who think that Christ rode upon the ass as well as on the colt, in Matt. xxi.

to any earthly pomp exhibited to crowned heads: for the homage they receive from their subjects is often the effect of compulsion; it is extorted by the strong hand of despotism, and the praises offered to them are only flattery, in which the heart takes no part; but in the present triumphant entry of Jesus, the acclamations of the people were perfectly voluntary, and the genuine effusions of a free and willing mind. Wherefore "a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem," regardless of the animosity and indignation of the Pharisees, "took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried: Hosanna,* blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. As it is written,† fear not daughter of Sion: behold thy king cometh sitting on an ass's colt. These things his disciples did not know at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered, that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things to him," for the literal accomplishment of this prophecy. "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut boughs from the" olive "trees, and strewed them in the way," yet in such manner as not to obstruct the passage. "And when he was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet,‡ the whole multitude of his disciples," * transported as it were out of themselves, "began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: Blessed be the king who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory on high. And the multitudes that went before and that followed," answered these acclamations by similar effusions of joy, and they "cried out, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh: Hosanna in the highest." It appears that the Holy Ghost on this occasion, secretly inspired† their tongues, and, through their means, caused loud thanks to be offered to Jesus for an approaching blessing of which as yet they had no conception: a blessing consisting in the ignominious death which he was about to suffer for their sakes. If therefore the effusions of the heart can alone render applause truly valuable, never was a triumph more honourable to the object of it than was this present triumph of Jesus, although it outwardly displayed nothing but humility and meanness. The Pharisees viewed this scene in a very different light. "Whilst "the multitude therefore gave testimony," viz. the same multitude "that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead," (and it was for this reason also that the multitude came to meet him because they had heard that he

* This word Hosanna was an acclamation much in use with the Jews, and when applied to God, it meant, *save us, we beseech thee;* or if applied to their sovereign prince, it corresponds to the words *God save the king.*

† Zachary ix. 9.

‡ Between this mount and the city of Jerusalem there lay nothing but the valley of Jehosaphat, through which ran the brook Cedron.—Calmet.

* Viz. those who moved by the miracles of Christ had followed him from Galilee. Hence they appear to have been different from the crowds mentioned by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John, and therefore we have placed in the context the acclamations of both.

† See the church office for the blessing of palms.

had done this miracle,) "the Pharisees" were beyond expression filled with jealousy at what they witnessed, and "therefore said among themselves: Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold the whole world," in open violation of our authority, "is gone after him."

However, it would have been, in the present moment, extremely unsafe to lay hands on Jesus, whilst so well guarded by the affections of the people, and therefore all that the Pharisees thought proper to do was that "some of" them "from amongst the multitude, said to him," in mild terms: "Master, rebuke thy disciples. To whom he said: I say to you that if these should hold their peace, the" very "stones" in the highway * will supply their place, and "will cry out" in my praise. The Pharisees, therefore, prudently refrained from violent measures, but failed not to treasure up in their minds the acclamations which they had witnessed, intending in due time and place to make them a subject of accusation against him. But as for Jesus, in the midst of this triumph, he entertained thoughts widely different from those of the applauding multitude. For "when he drew near" to Jerusalem, "seeing the city," and considering its obstinate blindness, "he wept over it, saying, if thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and straighten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." All these evils which Christ has described as impending over this miserable city, took place accordingly, about thirty-eight years afterwards, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and levelled it with the ground. Christ foretells that they would cast a trench around it; this refers to the line of circumvallation which Titus caused to be drawn at about a mile distance, and which passed by Mount Olivet. He moreover encompassed and straightened it on all sides, as here foretold by Christ, when by means of his whole army, he built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs quite round the city in the short space of three days, which prevented all ingress and egress, and thus occasioned a dreadful famine. Jesus moreover, added, that the enemy would totally destroy the city and its inhabitants, which was exactly fulfilled in the taking of Jerusalem; for according to Josephus * whose authority, in this respect, cannot be called in question, eleven hundred thousand Jews perished on this occasion: and excepting three towers which Titus spared as a specimen to all future ages of the beauty of this city, it was completely

* This seems to have been a proverbial expression, and signifies no more than that God was determined to glorify our Saviour on that day.

* De bello, l. 6. c. 13, &c. The argument for the truth of Christianity which is taken from the *history* of the destruction of Jerusalem as related by *Josephus*, compared with our Saviour's prediction of that event, has always been considered as one of the strongest, which can be urged, either against the Jews in particular, or against unbelievers in general. See Lardner's Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. i. chap. 3.

ruined, and the very ground ploughed out on which it stood. And all this, as Christ declares, was in consequence of its not having known the time when God visited it by his Son during the three years of his ministry in Judea.

CHAPTER CX.

JESUS DRIVES THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE A SECOND TIME.*
MATT. XXI. MARK XI. LUKE XIX. JOHN XII.

"And when he had entered Jerusalem" by the golden gate which looks towards the east, and which was not far distant from the temple, "the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Hence it appears that the crowds of people who had thus honourably attended Jesus, were not so much inhabitants of Jerusalem as of Galilee or of some other province: and probably those persons, who had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, and a few of the Pharisees, composed the chief part of such as came out of the city on this occasion. The procession terminated at the temple, when Jesus dismounting from the colt, made his solemn entry into it as into his Father's house, in quality of High Priest and master of this place of worship. Of his authority he gave the most miraculous proof by his zeal against those who profaned it. For upon his entering into the first court called the court of the Gentiles, or of the unclean, he found it occupied by a fair or market for the purpose of supplying all sorts of victims suitable to the various kinds of sacrifices required by the law, more especially those that were in the greatest demand at this season of the paschal festival, such as lambs, kids, and doves, which those Jews who came from distant parts, could not conveniently bring with them. In former times this species of merchandize was sold in the city, or in the neighbouring villages, and not in the temple; but the priests had thought proper to consult at once both their own private advantage and the convenience of the public, by allowing this trade to be carried on in the first court of the temple, which was of considerable extent. They likewise permitted the money changers to fix their station there, whose trade was necessarily connected with other species of traffic; and they derived no inconsiderable profit from the rents arising from the space thus occupied by them. "And

* See the first, chap. 19.
The expulsion of the sellers out of the temple by Christ happened the same day that he entered Jerusalem in triumph, according to St. Matthew and St. Luke, for what the former mentions, verse 15. of the children crying out *Hosanna*, seems clearly to belong to this day. Wherefore we must conclude that St. Mark, who seems to refer this event to the second day, recapitulates what took place the day before. See St. Austin, l. 2. De. Cons. Evan c. 68. Hence the narration of St. Mark has been somewhat changed. Some persons however, as A. Lapide and Tirinus, are of opinion, that St. Matthew and St. Luke have anticipated this history, and that St. Mark alone follows the true order of things, since he alone expressly makes a distinction of the several days. Moreover, Cajetan thinks that Christ cast out the buyers and sellers on both days, that is, on Sunday and Monday.

when" Jesus "was entered into the temple," he was struck with the indignity here offered to the Deity; and viewing the holy place thus turned into a common market, he was immediately inflamed with divine zeal. Taking, therefore, a scourge into his hands, "he began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And he suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple." St. Jerome justly considers it as one of Christ's greatest miracles, that he should singly be able to disperse so great a concourse of people, even in the presence of those very priests who gave a sanction to their profanation. It may well be presumed, that the bright rays * of the Majesty which darted from his eyes on this occasion, gave an irresistible splendour to his features, and effected that which was otherwise beyond the power of any single individual.

Jesus justified this action by the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremy; the former of whom points out the particular destination of God's temple, and the latter describes the abuse which is made of it by profanation, and by all manner of crimes. "And he taught, saying to them: Is it not written: my house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations" in their necessities? "But you have made it a den of thieves," by the many injustices, deceits, and perjuries, committed by those who trade there under your sanction and authority. "Which" cutting reproaches "when the chief priests and the scribes had heard, they sought" still more "how they might destroy him; for they feared him because the whole multitude was in admiration at his doctrine."

After this instance of justice, Jesus next displayed an example of mercy and compassion. For "there came to him the blind and the lame in the temple, and he healed them." This gave occasion to the children who were present to cause the whole temple to resound afresh with their joyful acclamations, crying out aloud: Hosanna, praise and glory to the Son of David, to the king of Israel. "And the chief priests and the scribes seeing the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David, were moved with indignation, and said to him: Hearest thou what they say? And Jesus said to them: Yes, have you never read" that verse of the eighth psalm, "out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" * Jesus hereby insinuated, that it was truly the divine Spirit which opened the mouth of these little children to sound forth his praise, and that these little acclamations were wholly unsolicited on his part.

"Now there were some Gentiles † among them who came up" to Jeru-

* Igneum enim quoddam atque sidereum radiabat ex oculis ejus, et divinitatis majestas lucebat in facie.—St. Hier.

* It is plain from this and many other texts, that we ought to read the Old Testament with an eye to Christ, who was the end of the law.

† These either were proselytes who had been Gentiles, and now had embraced the Jewish law, or they were such amongst the Gentiles who owned and served the one true God, as Cornelius did, Acts x. but did not submit themselves to circumcision, and the other Jewish rites and ceremonies. These could only enter into that part of the temple called the court of the Gentiles.

salem "to adore on the festival day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee," perhaps as to a person known to them, living in Syro-Phenicia, "and they desired him saying: Sir, we would willingly see Jesus. Philip," deeming the request a matter of some difficulty, "cometh and telleth Andrew," his senior in the apostleship: "again Andrew and Philip told it to Jesus," who viewing in this small number of Gentiles, as it were the first-fruits of all the Gentile world that in future ages would believe in him, readily consented to allow them access to his person. "And Jesus answered them, saying: the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified by the faith of all nations. But as this their conversion was not to be effected till after his death, he added, "Amen, amen I say to you: unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it remaineth there alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit:" even so after my death, shall I have much fruit among the Gentiles, by my apostles, sent to instruct and baptize all nations. And in this my disciples must be ready to follow my example; for, "he that loveth his temporal "life" so far as to preserve it at the expense of justice, or of truth, or of conscience, by unlawful gratifications, "shall lose it" infallibly for all eternity: "and he that hateth his life in this world," so as to be ready to forfeit it for the sake of truth and of justice, "preserveth it unto life everlasting." He exhorteth his disciples to make this geatest effort of Christian courage by holding out to them the immensity of the reward which they were to receive. "If any man," therefore, says he, "minister to me," and desires to be of the number of my disciples, let him follow me even unto death; "and" then "where I am, there also shall my minister be." For if any man thus "minister to me" at the hazard of his own life, "him will my Father honour" with an eternal crown of glory in heaven.*

At the mention of his approaching death, Jesus chose to humble himself so far as to give an instance of the weakness of nature, by allowing dread and apprehension to take possession of his soul. "Now my soul is troubled," said he. For although he encouraged us to a contempt of death, yet he dissembled not the agitation of mind which he felt at the prospect of it, but allowed it to be publicly noticed from a motive both of humility and prudence. By thus participating the common weakness of mankind, he chose to show that himself was not exempt from the natural horror which we all have of the separation of the soul from the body; and that when he exacted from us this submission as a necessary point of our duty, he was himself fully sensible of the extent and rigour of such a sacrifice. He even by his own conduct, pointed out how far his disciples might lawfully endeavour to avoid death, and that was by addressing themselves to God under this severe pressure of the mind, and praying to be delivered from the impending danger. "And what shall I say?" he exclaimed; to whom shall I have recourse? It is to thee, "Father, save me from this hour."

* Apoc. iii. 21.

Christ taught them by his example to overcome the natural horror and dread of death, to suppress the sentiments of nature, and to ask merely of God, that he would be pleased to glorify his name by the sacrifice of their lives, under the firm persuasion that it was God himself, who, by a particular providence, placed them under the necessity of undergoing this trial. "But for this cause," said he, "I came into this hour. Father, glorify thy name" by my sufferings and death; may they serve to restore to thee that glory of which sin robbed thee: to make known to men the severity of thy justice, and likewise the excess of thy love. "A voice then came from heaven," to show that his prayer was heard, saying: "I have both glorified it" already by the many miracles thou hast done in my name, "and will glorify it again" by thy resurrection, by the faith of all nations who shall believe in thee, and by the glory resulting from thy death.

"The multitude therefore that stood and heard" a certain indistinct noise, "said that it thundered: others," who heard an inarticulate sound, "said: an angel spoke to him. Jesus answered and said: This voice came not because of me," as it were to satisfy me of the divine favour, or to comfort me against the fear of death: "but for your sakes," that you may believe in me, and may understand that "now is the judgment of the world," which is about to be delivered from the tyranny of the devil, "now shall the princes of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all things to myself;" that is by faith and love. "(Now this he said, signifying what death he should die)." Thus Christ declares the very different judgment of God in regard to the devil, now to be vanquished and cast forth, and of the world, now to be freed from his tyranny and drawn to Christ. By this efficacious attraction he would signify the power of his grace, the strong opposition to be raised by the devil against the conversion of mankind, and the weakness of human nature which stood in need of being thus drawn to Jesus Christ. "The multitude," perceiving from the words of Christ that he spoke of his death, "answered him: We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou: The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man," that is thus to suffer? intimating that he could not be the Messiah, if it related to him. "Jesus" did not think proper at the present moment to explain himself more fully: he "therefore" only "said to them," as an inducement for them to believe in him: "Yet a little while, the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light," that is, the children of God himself, to which high honour a firm and ready faith is the best and surest guide. "These things Jesus spoke, and he went away, and hid himself from them," because the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their understanding rendered them unworthy of enjoying any longer his divine pre-

sence and conversation. "And whereas he had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in him." But lest this their obstinate incredulity might scandalize the Gentiles, the Evangelist remarks, that nothing happened in their regard but what had been foretold, "that the saying of Isaiah * the prophet might be fulfilled which he said," speaking in the person of the Messiah: "Lord who hath believed our hearing? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" for the Jews would not acknowledge him, either in the wisdom of his words, or in the power of his works. St. Paul quotes the same passage † on the same subject. St. John points out from Isaiah the cause of this astonishing incredulity, viz. the blindness of their minds and the obstinacy of their will. "Therefore," says he, "they could not believe because Isaiah said again: he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart and be converted, and I should heal them." These effects are to be attributed to the malice of their will as to the natural and immediate cause, to the seduction of the infernal fiend who tempted them, and lastly, to the just judgment of God, who, in punishment of their crimes, so far left them in their darkness, as not to remove the obstables which shut out the light from their eyes.

Lest the meaning of these words should be applied to some other event, the Evangelist adds: "These things said Isaiah" of the Messiah, "when he saw his glory and spoke of him." For this chapter represents to us, under a sensible, but sublime and glorious figure, the holy Trinity, of which Jesus is the second person. His divine mission into this world is likewise treated of, and when the Father, with apparent concern, seeks out whom to send, the prophet who here represents the Son, offers himself in his name, and declares his readiness to assume our human flesh for that purpose.

In relating this general incredulity of the Jews, the Evangelist makes an exception of some individuals. "However," says he, "many of the chief men also believed in him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, that they might not be cast out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God;" that is, they preferred the retaining of an honourable rank amongst mankind to the gaining of true glory, which is according to God, and with which he would infallibly have rewarded them in the most ample manner. Thus it appears, that the glory of men, and other temporal considerations are the great obstacles which hinder mankind from seeking and embracing the truth. "But Jesus" making his appearance again in the temple, cried out against these timid converts and the incredulous Pharisees, "and said: he that believeth in me doth not believe in me" only, "but in him" also "that sent me. And he that seeth me" with the eyes of faith, such as I really am, viz. according to my situation and divine nature, "seeth him that sent me," we having one and the same essence. "I the" eternal "light am come into the world, that whoso-

* Isa. liii. 1.
† Rom. x. 15.

ever believeth in me may not remain in the darkness" of error and sin. "And if any man" after this "hear my words, and keep them not, I do not judge him; for I came not to judge the world" at present, "but to save the world." He must not however flatter himself that he shall remain unpunished: for "he that despiseth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day," and shall condemn him for having rejected this divine light. "For I have not spoken" merely "of myself," without commission from above: "but the Father who sent me he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is" a sure guide "to life everlasting; what things therefore I speak, as the Father hath ordered me, so do I speak," and he that despises them despises the words of God, and renounces that eternal life which is offered him. "And having viewed all about, when the hour of evening was come leaving them, he went out of the city into Bethania," as usual. "with the twelve" Apostles, "and remained there."

CHAPTER CXI.

JESUS CURSES THE BARREN FIG-TREE, AND EXHORTS HIS DISCIPLES TO FAITH IN PRAYER, AND TO FORGIVE THEIR ENEMIES. MATT XXI. MARK XI. LUKE XIX.

"AND the next day, when they came out from Bethania returning into the city, he was hungry. And when he had seen afar off a fig-tree, by the way-side, having leaves upon it, he came" to see, "if perhaps he might find any thing upon it. And when he was come to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the time for figs." * This hunger, though real and pressing, was not without a mysterious meaning, and afforded him an opportunity of drawing from this fig-tree a subject of instruction both to the Jews and to all his disciples.

In regard to the first, it was a menace, or rather a prediction of the reprobation of the Jews until the end of the world. For he cursed the fig-tree, and "said to it: may no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever; and his disciples heard it, and immediately the fig-tree withered away.

It is certain both that Jesus was not deceived in regard to this fig-tree, when going up to it he discovered no fruit, and that the tree itself could not merit so severe an anathema. Yet, however harmless in its own nature, it was culpable relatively to the nation which it represented; for the whole transaction was no other than a prophetic parable. By the fig-tree was represented the Jewish synagogue; the hunger of Jesus was a figure of his extreme desire of finding it productive of good works, such as would be answerable to the great pains which

* But there is no time nor season at which the servants of God can be excused from bringing forth the fruits of good works.

he had taken in its cultivation during the space of more than three years. The leaves of the fig-tree were those pompous words of the ancient law, the temple, the ceremonies, sacrifices, traditions, and all the outward form of worship upon which the Jews plumed themselves, and claimed merit in the sight of God, in proportion as they conceived themselves distinguished above all other nations. Yet all this exterior show was void of good works, the only valuable produce of the tree. By the withering of the tree, which followed the imprecation of Jesus, are represented the reprobation and utter barrenness of the synagogue, which to this day remains as an useless, barren trunk, bearing no fruit to eternal life.

"And they came again to Jerusalem, and" Jesus "was teaching daily in the temple. And the chief priests and the Scribes,* and the rulers of the people," having now no longer to search after him, sought to destroy him; and they found not what to do to him; for all the people was very attentive to hear him," and seemed disposed to repel by force any violence they might offer to his person. "And when evening was come, he went forth out of the city, and when they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And the disciples seeing it, wondered, saying: how soon it hath withered away.† And Peter remembering" the words spoken by Jesus, "said to him: Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which thou didst curse is withered away."

From the circumstance of this withered tree, Jesus took occasion to hold forth to his disciples an example of the all-powerful efficacy of faith and confidence in God. "And Jesus answering, saith to them: have ye faith of God? Amen I say to you, if you shall have faith and stagger not, you shall not only do this of the fig-tree, but also whosoever shall say to this mountain: be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him. Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." This promise, which is only in general terms, necessarily implies a restriction, though it be not here expressed, viz. that the thing asked for be such as may tend to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Besides this immovable constancy in faith and confidence in God, which admits of no hesitation or doubt, Jesus requires of them another condition no less indispensably necessary, and that is an entire forgiveness of injuries. "And when you shall stand to pray," says he, "forgive, if you have ought against any man; that your Father, who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your father, who is in heaven, forgive you your sins."

* St. Mark mentions the same evil designs of the Scribes against Jesus in the preceding chapter, and immediately after their expulsion from the temple, with this connection of words, *which when the high priests had heard*. But as they continued to entertain the same inveterate animosity against Jesus, St. Luke insinuates by these words, *he was daily teaching in the temple*, that they were no less actively employed in carrying on their conspiracy during the following days when Jesus was preaching, than on the day when he expelled them from the temple.

† St. Matthew, ver. 20, mentions this surprise of the disciples, as expressed immediately after the curse of the fig-tree; but it is clear from St. Mark that they did not notice its withering till the following morning. We may therefore infer that it took place imperceptibly, without being immediately observed.

CHAPTER CXII.

CHRIST JUSTIFIES HIS AUTHORITY AGAINST THE SCRIBES AND ELDERS, BY A QUESTION WHICH HE PROPOSES CONCERNING JOHN'S BABTISM—THE PARABLE OF TWO SONS WHOM THEIR FATHER SENT TO LABOUR IN HIS VINEYARD. MATT XXI. MARK XI. LUKE XX.

"AND in the day-time he was teaching in the temple: but at night going out, he abode in the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him. And it came to pass that on one of the days," which was Tuesday, "when he was come into the temple, and was walking" there, teaching the multitudes, he was soon after interrupted by some of the principal persons amongst the Jews, and the day was chiefly spent in a variety of disputes and questions which passed between them. The several subjects treated of were, 1, His mission. 2. Various reproaches, accusations, and threats, which he disguised under the veil of parables. 3. A question regarding the duties we owe to society. 4. The discussion of a controverted point relating to the resurrection of the body. Wherefore, "as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the ancients met together," and "came and spoke to him, saying: tell us by what power thou dost these things," such as preaching to the people, receiving the honours due only to the Messiah, making a triumphal entry into the temple, and driving thence all the victims destined for the various sacrifices? "Who hath given thee this authority that thou shouldst do these things?"* This question was grounded upon the justly received principle, that no man can give to himself the authority of the ministry, but must receive it either immediately from God or from lawful superiors, who derive their authority in a regular manner from those who were originally commissioned by God. Hence they meant to infer, that Jesus had incurred both the guilt of schism and of sedition, by thus intruding himself, without a lawful mission, into an office to

* "It was a reasonable demand," says Dr. Barrow (of Supremacy, p. 49.) "which was made to our Saviour: *tell us* by what authority thou dost these things, or who is he that gave thee this authority? And the reasonableness of it our Lord did often avow, declaring that if by his doctrine and works he had not vouched the divinity of his authority, it had been no sin to disbelieve or reject him." St. John v. verses 31, 36. chap. x. verses 25, 37. chap. xv. verses 22, 24. This principle, which supposes in pastors the necessity of a lawful mission, was formerly, and may still be triumphantly urged against Luther, Calvin, Tindal, Cranmer, and all the other first reformers of the Catholic Church. For whence, said the Catholics, did these innovators derive their mission? Who sent them to preach? Who gave them authority to reform and alter the whole state of God's Church? Let them show their commission for this purpose, either *ordinary* or *extraordinary*. If it be pretended that they had an extraordinary mission immediately derived from God, why did they not show their credentials stamped with the broad seal of heaven: that is, why did they not by clear and evident miracles, such as Christ and his apostles wrought, attest their being thus extraordinarily commissioned for the extraordinary work of the reformation? Without such proofs as these no pretensions to an extraordinary mission, in opposition to *the ordinary Church authority*, established both by the words and miracles of Christ, can be received. Otherwise every fanatic or enthusiast may at his pleasure pretend a call from heaven, and upon this pretext preach up his own

which none but the Messiah could have pretensions. This objection Jesus had already answered before-hand, proving incontestably by miracles, which are the voice of God, that he was sent immediately from God. Hence he says;* "If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin." He now desires that they should solve the objection themselves, by answering a question of a similar nature, concerning John the Baptist. "And Jesus answering, said to them: I also have one word to ask you, which if you shall tell me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John," together with his preaching and doctrine, "from whence was it? from heaven or from men? Answer me." In fact, had they avowed that John was sent by the Almighty, they would have fully answered the question which they proposed to Jesus, since from this acknowledgment of John's divine mission, he could most justly have inferred that therefore his own was stamped with the same divine authority; because John himself had given to it the most public testimony. The consequence here inferred rests upon this unanswerable argument, that a mission, if uncertain or contested, as his mission was in the present instance, ought justly to be deemed as coming from God, when avowedly acknowledged and approved as such by a man whom God sent and authorized. Now John the Baptist was that person sent by God, and upon their acknowledged opinion of this holy personage, the whole argument rests. The Pharisees foresaw the advantage to be derived in favour of Jesus, were they to avow their approbation of John, and likewise the danger to be apprehended for themselves, should they make him the object of their censure. "But they thought within themselves, saying: if we shall say from heaven, he will say to us: why then did you not believe him? But if we shall say from men, we are afraid of the multitude; the whole people will stone us; for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. For all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed. And answering Jesus, they said: that they knew not whence he was." In return for this evasive conduct, "Jesus also replied: neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

But previously to his changing the subject of debate, he chose to draw from it an argument of no small confusion to the Pharisees, by reproaching them that they had, by their contempt of the baptism and preach-

dreams for the pure word of God, in contempt of all authority, whether of Church or state. If it be said that the mission of the first reformers was *ordinary*, and derived to them by ministry of men, it behoves them to point out what men these were from whom they derived this ordinary power. Were they Catholics or Protestants? I presume not Protestants, because they cannot name any such who commissioned them to preach: not Catholics; because the religion which Luther and his reforming brethren endeavoured to propagate was a new religion directly opposite to that of Catholics, and therefore could not be taught in virtue of any commission from Catholics.

If it be urged that Luther had received his orders in the Catholic Church, it is easily answered that this could not authorize him to commence preacher and teacher of *another* religion, any more than the orders which Mr. Whiston, or Mr. Wesley might receive in the Protestant Church of England could authorize them to teach a doctrine anathematized by that Church. The same answer holds good against Cranmer and all other heretics who, after receiving orders in the Catholic Church, separated from her, and pretended to reform her faith. For it is evident to common sense, that the bare receiving of orders in the Church brings with it a greater obligation of obedience to her decrees, not any commission to question her authority, preach down her doctrine, or contemn her decisions.

* John xv. 24.

ing of John the Baptist, made it fully appear, that all their pretended justice and boasted obedience to God's law were false and imaginary. Wherefore "he began to speak to them in parables," and asked their opinion upon the following case: "But what think you? A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first, he said; son go work to-day in my vineyard: and he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner: and he answering, said: I go, Sir, and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to him the first." Without entering into a further explication of the parable, "Jesus saith to them: Amen I say to you, that the publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you," who pretend to guide others to it. For of these two sons, the one is a figure of professed wicked livers, the other of the Pharisees. The former were sinners in earnest, and made no difficulty openly to avow their being so: the latter on the contrary, carried the outward garb of a devout life, and made a public profession of piety. Upon the former, God lays his injunctions to work in his vineyard, viz. to bring their souls into a due state of cultivation by repentance: and to this summons they declare, by the whole course of their sinful life, that they pay no regard. Afterwards, however, touched by the example and preaching of John the Baptist, as by the voice of God, they turned from their evil ways, and did sincere penance. God lays a similar injunction upon the Pharisees, who constantly promise to obey him. All their outward show of piety and professions of sanctity seem as it were to say: I go, Sir; yet they remain precisely in the same state, and their obedience goes not beyond their lips. "For John," said Christ, "came to you" from God, leading a penitential and irreproachable life, "in the way of justice, and you did not believe in him," or follow his example: "but the publicans and harlots believed in him," and obeyed his injunctions. "But you seeing it," yet "did not afterwards repent, that you might believe in him," and this is a just subject of reproach against you, which clearly evinces that all your pretended justice and virtue are founded on deceit and illusion.

CHAPTER CXIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO WICKED HUSBANDMEN. MATT XXI. MARK XII. LUKE XX.

In a second parable Jesus lays to the charge of the Pharisees the parricide which they long had in contemplation, and which they had already perpetrated in their hearts. Herein we may observe, 1. The great things which God had done in favour of the Jews. 2. The great outrages which they in return committed against his divine Majesty. 3. The terrible ven-

geance which God denounces against them for their ingratitude.

"And" Jesus "began to speak to the people: Hear ye another parable: there was a man, an householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a strange land for a long time. And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent a servant to receive of the fruits of the vineyard from these husbandmen; who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent him away. And again he sent to them another servant: but they beat him also," and "stoned and wounded" him "in the head; and treating him reproachfully, sent him away empty. And again he sent a third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out, and killed him. Again he sent other servants more than the former: and they did to them in like manner: some they beat, others they killed. Then the lord of the vineyard said: what shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be, when they see him, they will reverence him. Therefore having yet one son most dear to him, he also sent him unto them, last of all, saying: they will reverence my son. But the husbandmen seeing the son, said to one another: this is the heir, come let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance: and taking him, they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen, ? They say to him: he will bring those evil men to an evil end: and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruit in due season.* Jesus saith to them:" yes, "he will come" himself, "and will destroy these husbandmen, and will give his vineyard to others. Which they hearing, said to him: God forbid" this misfortune should happen to us. For they saw very well that this parable was addressed to them. "But he looking on them, said: what is this then that is written? The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes," to see him whom you rejected as a seducer thus made the Saviour of the Gentile world. "Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall by scandal or incredulity, "fall on this stone, shall be broken" himself, without damaging it in any manner, and yet though mortally bruised, his cure may be effected by a sincere repentance. "But on whomsoever it shall fall," with all its weight, which shall happen at the last day, "it shall grind him to powder," without the least hope of recovery. "And when the chief priests aud Pharisees had heard his parables, they knew that he spoke this parable to them; and seeking to lay hands on

* To reconcile what appears contrary in St. Matthew and S. Luke, we must observe with St. Austin, lib. 2. de Cons. Evang. chap. 70. that this parable was not only spoken to those who had questioned him by what authority he taught the people, but likewise to the people themselves, as St. Luke tells us in express terms. It was therefore some of the people who were well disposed towards our Saviour, who said to him: *he will bring those evil men to an evil end.* And as Jesus approved and confirmed this answer, the priests, who saw the scope of the parable, said: *God forbid;* viz. that we should have any desire of putting to death the heir of the family, and drawing upon ourselves destruction. What follows in St. Matthew plainly evinces that the priests contradicted this parable of our Lord.

him the same hour, they feared the multitudes, because they held him as a prophet."

This parable is immediately addressed to the Jews, whom our blessed Saviour reproaches with their long and tedious ingratitude to God; signifying to them the dreadful judgments they were about to draw down upon themselves by this horrible abuse of the divine favours. But it contains a no less instructive lesson for Christians, who considering what Christ has done for them in establishing his Church, that mysterious vineyard, which he has planted and watered with his blood, have reason to dread no less than the Jews, the terrible effects of his indignation, if they abuse the graces conferred upon them, and rendered not fruit in due season. The kingdom of God shall be taken from them as it was from the Jews, and given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. In effect what the Jews have suffered for their wickedness and ingratitude, has also been the fate of many Christian kingdoms and states, and the mournful lot of many once flourishing churches, whose candlesticks are removed and light extinct. The same conduct God observes towards particular persons, in punishment of their repeatedly abusing his graces; he at last withdraws them, and leaves them to themselves, and to the miserable consequences of this merited privation of grace.

CHAPTER CXIV.

THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.* MATT. XXII.

After the heavy accusation brought against the priests and Scribes, Jesus concluded his discourse by a parable addressed to all who persevere in their incredulity. In its three several parts it describes the reprobation of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles to the faith, and the final judgment both of the one and the other. "And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying: the kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage feast for his son." For the Son of God came down from heaven to wed to himself our human nature by the mystery of his incarnation, and every faithful soul in particular, by a happy union of grace and love. This union is begun here on earth by faith; it is cemented by charity in all such as are united to Christ, and will be consummated and made perpetual hereafter by the eternal enjoyment of Christ in his heavenly kingdom.† "And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage." This God did in regard to the Jews by the prophets, by John the Baptist, and even by Jesus Christ himself, "and" yet "they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: tell them that were invited: behold I have prepared my dinner, my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage." After the ascension of Jesus Christ

* See on this subject, chap. 93.
† St. Hilary, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, &c.

into heaven, the king in the parable sent other servants in greater number, viz. his Apostles and disciples, to inform the invited Jews that the banquet was ready; because the Christian religion being established, the way to eternal happiness was laid open to mankind: that his beeves and fatlings were now killed, viz. that the Messiah had been put to death, was risen again, and now placed on the table of the altar, to be really and truly eaten in all the sacrifices that should be offered up to God until the end of time, because his flesh thus raised again to life and immortality, is the only true sacrifice of the new law which succeeds to all the ancient victims of the temple. This is described under the idea of beeves and fatlings. Lastly, he adds, that all things were now ready for their sanctification, and that they had only to enter into the Church, and to sit down at the table of the nuptial banquet. "But they neglected" this invitation, so full of love and affection, "and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize," according to the various calls of their prevailing passions and worldly engagements. "And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard it, he was angry, and sending his armies," under Vespasian and Titus, "he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city."*

When the Jews through their own obstinacy, were thus reprobated, God called the Gentiles to occupy their places. "Then saith he to the servants: the marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy; go therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests." This has been done by the Apostles and their successors in every age: they have carried the gospel successively to all nations, and gathered together in the Church, which is the banqueting room, all whom they met, good and bad, worthy and unworthy, as appears by the sequel. Thus all the tables were filled with guests who seated themselves to partake of the feast. But lest the Gentiles should falsely imagine, that to be admitted to this eternal banquet, which begins in this life by faith in Jesus Christ, nothing more was required than to have accepted the invitation, the king is described as entering into the banqueting room, in order to view and examine the several guests. This is what God will do by his divine Son at the day of judgment. "And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment." By this one man are represented all wicked Christians who, after having entered into the Church by faith in Jesus Christ, have not been careful to clothe themselves with the works of justice and charity, which their faith should naturally produce. As a ragged and unbecoming dress in persons invited to a marriage feast would be deemed an affront to those who gave the invitation, so also nothing can be more unworthy of the holiness of the Christian religion, than

* God sooner or later takes vengeance on such as despise his word or persecute his ministers.

the wicked lives of its professors. "And the king," addressing himself to this rash and inconsiderate person, "saith to him: friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent," being convicted by the testimony of his own conscience: an image of that confusion which awaits every impenitent sinner at the awful tribunal of the all-seeing Judge. "Then the king said to the waiters: bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen;" many are called to enter into the Church by faith, but few are chosen to enter heaven, because they strive not by good works to make their calling and election sure.

CHAPTER CXV

IN ANSWER TO THE ENSNARING QUESTION OF THE PHARISEES, CHRIST TEACHES US TO GIVE TO CÆSAR WHAT IS CÆSAR'S, AND TO GOD WHAT BELONGS TO GOD. MATT XXII. MARK XII. LUKE XX.

THE third conference which Jesus had with the Jews, relates to the political or civil conduct of mankind, as directed and influenced by religion; a subject the more delicate, as it regards one of the most essential rights of the state under which we live. After having taken the city of Jerusalem, and reduced Judea into a Roman province, Pompey imposed a tax upon the Jews, which, if not in the shape of an annual tribute, was paid however by compulsory subsidies, such as the wants of the republic called for. But in the second numbering of the Jewish people, exacted by Augustus, in which Quirinus was the acting magistrate, the Emperor changed this casual contribution into a certain fixed annual tax to be levied by capitation; and this was paid in a particular species of coin bearing the name and portrait of the reigning Emperor. The Jews considered this tax as a badge of slavery, and one Judas, of the province of Galilee, brought himself forward in opposition to it, declaring it to be unworthy of a free people who adored the true God, to pay tribute to strangers and idolaters. Although his efforts and those of his followers were at that time suppressed by violent measures, yet the doctrine he broached, far from expiring with him, continued to be eagerly patronized by the people at large. On this occasion, "then, the Pharisees going" to a small distance, "consulted among themselves how to ensnare" Jesus "in his speech." They flattered themselves that being a Galilean, he would adopt the general opinion of his countrymen in opposition to earthly potentates, or if, on the contrary, he gave not into their way of thinking, they fully hoped to be able to render him odious to the people as a favourer of the hated capitation tax: and having once obtained this end, they would then be able, without any danger of opposition, to

seize upon his person. "And watching him, they sent treacherous men who should fain themselves just." These were "some of the Pharisees" and their disciples, accompanied likewise "with the Herodians," or courtiers of Herod, who were known advocates and supporters of the tax in question. As these were entire strangers to Jesus, the Pharisees imagined that they would be received by him without suspicion. Their great aim was "to take hold of him in his discourse," on his letting fall any expression against the law, or reflecting upon the sovereign; "that" so "they might afterwards deliver him up" as a delinquent "to the authority and power of the Governor." Thus we may observe the blackest malice on one side, disguised under expressions of flattery, and a clear sighted wisdom on the other, resting its defence only on an open and upright sincerity. These emissaries entered upon their task, by assuming a most modest and backward appearance, with all the exterior garb of persons well affected towards Jesus. "And they asked him, saying: Master, we know that thou art sincere," and "that thou speakest and teachest rightly, and thou dost not respect any person, and carest not for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Tell us therefore what dost thou think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or shall we not give it?" insinuating hereby, that their own ideas leaned towards the negative. "But Jesus knowing their wickedness" and "their wiliness, saith to them: Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites," to act in violation of the submission which is due to the sovereign power of the state? "Show me the coin of the tribute, that I may see it. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They answering, said to him: Cæsar's. And he said to them: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God, the things that are God's." By which expression he plainly determines in opposition to the error of Judas the Galilean, that the duties of a subject towards his sovereign are by no means derogatory from or incompatible with the duties of religion which we owe to God; that we may acquit ourselves equally of both without prejudice to our conscience, and that it is even our duty to pay such taxes as are imposed for the exigences of the state. For, in this instance, Jesus declares not only that we may, but we ought to give to Cæsar his due; and that so far from its being unlawful, as alleged by certain seditious persons, it is a strict religious obligation, on the part of every subject, to pay what is by lawful authority demanded of him. "And hearing this, they could not reprehend his words before the people: and wondering at his" judicious "answer, they held their peace, and leaving him went their way."*

* Although Christ clearly establishes here the strict obligation of paying to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, to the confusion of his very enemies, yet we shall find them hereafter bringing forward against him the charge of disloyalty, as if he forbade tribute to be paid to Cæsar, Luke xxiii. 2. In like manner, in spite of the most explicit declarations of the Catholic Church respecting her loyalty and subjection to temporal powers, her enemies fail not to calumniate her doctrine, as inimical to the state and subversive of due subordination. Dr. Campbell, in his *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History*, speaking of the tenets of Catholics, is not afraid to say: "That no heresy has appeared so damnable as that which ascribes any kind of authority to magistrates, independent of the Pope: no doctrine so divine as that which exalts the ecclesiastical authority above

CHAPTER CXVI.

CHRIST CONFUTES THE SADDUCEES, WHO QUESTIONED HIM CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION. MATT. XXII. MARK XII. LUKE XX.

THE fourth point of discussion proposed to Jesus, was a controverted article of belief concerning the resurrection of the body, which was not admitted by the Sadducees. For on "that same day there came to him some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked him, saying: Master, Moses wrote unto us, if any man's brother die having a wife, and he leave no children, that his brother should take her to wife, and raise up seed unto his brother," to inherit his name and property. Now upon the strength of this regulation they stated the following supposed case. "There were seven brothers" amongst us; "and the first took a wife and died without sons. And the next took her, and he died without a son. And the third took her; and all the seven in like manner, and they left no seed and died. Last of all died also the woman. At the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her to wife." If she be adjudged to the eldest, the other six will be wronged; for having successively married her equally with the eldest, they have apparently a similar claim with him. Now it is a thing unheard of, as well as unnatural and unseemly, that she should continue to be at once the wife of the seven brethren together. Hence they boldly concluded it to be a clear consequence, that the resurrection of the body was a thing impossible, and as such absolutely incredible.

It would have sufficed for their argument had they made a supposition of only two brethren marrying successively the same wife: but it better suited their purpose of turning the resurrection of the body to ridicule, to state the circumstance of the seven brethren disputing together in the other world for the wife they had married in succession, and pleading against each other the merits of their respective claims.

With a view more fully to refute their error, Jesus traces it to its source, and taxes them with ignorance both of the scriptures, and of the

the civil, not only in spiritual matters, but in secular. Nay, the very pinnacle of orthodoxy with those gentlemen is, that the lawful commands of the civil magistrate do not bind the conscience: that our only motive to obedience here, is prudence, for fear of the temporal punishment denounced by him; and that if we have the address to elude his vigilance, and escape the punishment, our disobedience is no sin in the sight of God." So far the Doctor, and I may add nearly in his own words, that it is impossible for any thing to be more flatly contradictory to the doctrine of the Catholic Church than this injurious imputation; for she has always taught with the great Apostle St. Paul, the strict religious obligation of being subject to temporal powers, not only for fear of their wrath, but for conscience sake. I appeal to her councils, catechisms, pulpits, and spiritual books of direction. The following authority and public declaration of Clement XIV. addressed to all the Catholic Bishops of the Christian world, ought for ever to silence any such calumnious charge. "Be careful," says he, "that those, whose instruction in the law of the gospel is committed to your charge be made sensible from their very infancy of their sacred obligation of loyalty to their kings, of respect to their authority, and of submission to their laws, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake," &c.

infinite extent of God's omnipotence. He begins with stating the wide difference there is between the state of things in this mortal life, and in that which is to come. In the present state of things marriage is necessary, and was designed by the Almighty, as a resource to repair the losses occasioned by the mortality of mankind. But hereafter, when they shall become immortal, like the angels, they shall stand no longer in need of it, and the propagation of their species will be perfectly unnecessary. "And Jesus answering saith to them: Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God? For when they shall rise again from the dead, they shall neither marry nor be married: but are as angels in heaven. The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead, shall neither be married nor take wives. Nor can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," and as such their life will be wholly spiritual, exempt from all passions, and secure of a blessed immortality, which will render marriage entirely unnecessary. Jesus now proceeded to prove from scripture the doctrine of the resurrection. To enter into the force of his arguments we must recall to mind, that the principal error of the Sadducees was their denying the immortality of the soul, whence they inferred as a natural consequence, that therefore the resurrection of the body was a thing impossible. Jesus establishes the certainty of the former, in order thence to infer as a necessary consequence, the possibility of the latter. To this purpose he employs the following reasoning. The soul is immortal, and subsists after its separation from the body. No reason therefore can be brought why the dead should not rise again. For what is the resurrection of the body but the re-union of the soul with the body, the spiritual with the corporeal part of man? "Now that the dead rise again," said he, "Moses also showed at the" burning "bush;" for "have you not read, that which was spoken by God, saying to you: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"* Now "he is not the God of the dead," no one calling himself Lord or king of creatures destroyed and annihilated, "but of the living; for all," even the dead, "live to him," as to their souls at present, which will be hereafter united again to their bodies. "You therefore, do greatly err" in supposing the patriarchs to be no longer in a state of existence, and capable of serving the Most High. "And some of the Scribes answering said to him: Master, thou hast said well: and the multitude hearing it were in admiration at his doctrine," and expressed their astonishment at the readiness, clearness, solidity, and acuteness of his answers.

* Christ might have made use of other texts of scripture to prove the resurrection of the body. Such as that of Isaiah xxvi. "Thy dead men shall live, my slain shall rise again;" and Dan xii. "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," &c.; but he chose rather to quote the authority of Moses, as it was from him the Sadducees had taken their objection.

CHAPTER CXVII.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT OF DIVINE LOVE. MATT. XXII. MARK XII. LUKE XX.

"BUT the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, came together," and consulted how they might ensnare him without incurring a similar disgrace. "And there came one of the Scribes, a Doctor of the law, tempting him;" for "he had heard them reasoning together; and seeing that Jesus had answered them, he asked him" another question, in order to make a further trial of his knowledge. "Master," said he, "which is the great commandment of the law," and "the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first commandment is" that of Deuteronomy,* "Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one God; and" therefore "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the greatest and the first commandment."

In these few words we see expressed the motives which call for our love of God, the manner how we are to love him, and the measure or extent of this love.

1. Of these motives the first is drawn from the name of God, which in Hebrew signifies the first Being, the sovereign Good, the principle and source of all being and of all good, and consequently most amiable on his own account, and solely deserving of being infinitely loved by us.

* Deut. vi. 4.

The second arises from the term thy God, which refers to the true people of Israel, and shows the marked distinction with which he had honoured them, by acting as their God in a most particular manner, in choosing them for his own peculiar people, adopting them as his children, and distinguishing them by his favours, preferably to all the other nations of the world. This motive ought likewise the more powerfully to induce Christians to love God, as the utmost they can do for him must fall infinitely short of that immense love which he has first most gratuitously testified in their regard.

The third motive arises from the term Lord, which implies, that God having, in consequence of his supreme dominion over mankind, an undoubted right to require of them whatever he pleases, yet contents himself with claiming solely their love.

2. The manner of our loving God ought to be suitable to the God of truth. He requires us to love him from the bottom of our hearts, with a true, sincere, and solid love: a love which penetrating inwardly our souls with the tenderest sentiments of affection, shows itself likewise outwardly in the whole tenour of our life. For he who loves God with his lips only, and not with his heart, is a liar and a hypocrite; and he who loves God merely with his heart and not with his hands, by not giving proof of his

love in the practice of good works, is a sluggard who basely keeps truth in captivity; and he who loves God with his hands and not with his heart, by doing without relish or affection for God that which God commands, is either a Jew dreading the severity of punishment, or a philosopher foolishly ambitious of human applause.

III. The extent of divine love may be estimated by considering the unity of that God who commands us to love him with our whole heart. There being but one God, to him we must dedicate all the love and affection of which we are capable; and we may form some idea of this sovereign love thus enjoined us, by contrasting it with a heart either divided amongst various objects or cold and tepid in its love.

The unity of God cannot suffer a divided heart; it calls for the heart whole and entire; it does not allow us to divide our love between God and creatures, because whatever share we impart to created objects, of so much we defraud Almighty God. Yet there being persons whom God himself, by his law, requires us to love, this love, without dividing our hearts, must be referred only to that love which we bear to God, in the same manner as a small rivulet, which branches off from a large river, hastens, after a long circuit, to rejoin the waters from which it had separated, and even adds thereto those small streams which it may have collected in its course.

Secondly, The measure of the love of God is estimated by the infinite perfections of God, and especially by his goodness; and it requires, that we love him without measure. This infinite goodness calls for our whole heart, and this without reserve. It requires that we employ ourselves entirely in the love of God, by dedicating to that love our whole being, the powers of our soul, the senses of our body, our thoughts, words, and actions; or, according to the terms of the commandment, we are called upon to love God with our whole heart, that is, with the entire bent of our will, with our whole mind, by submitting our reason with all its lights to the principles of faith; with all our soul, by keeping all our passions within the bounds of justice; with all our power, by referring to him the use of our senses and the execution of all our designs.

In our present state however this love which is required of us must needs be defective in several respects, because it is not a love infinite in itself and worthy of God, such as the love which Jesus Christ, in his human nature, bore to his heavenly Father: nor is it a love which shows itself by continual and uninterrupted acts, like that of the saints in heaven, nor a love exempt from all concupiscence, as was the love of Adam in his happy state of original innocence.

To this greatest of all commandments Jesus added a second. "And the second," said he, "is like to this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He styles this commandment like to the first, both in the thing commanded, which is love, and in its extent, since this comprises all the precepts of the second table, as the former commandment comprised all the precepts of the first. To these two commandments he gives a decided

preference over all others. "There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets," because all the injunctions of the law and the prophets are here virtually included. "And the scribe," repeating and highly approving the answer of Jesus, "said to him: Well, Master, thou hast said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides him. And that he is to be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole mind, and with the whole soul and with the whole strength; and that to love one's neighbour as one's self is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices. And Jesus seeing that he had answered him wisely," and was now open to conviction, though at the first indisposed against him, "said to him. Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." But he had not it seems as yet attained to it, because he knew not him who, by his sufferings, was to merit for us the infusion of this love: and he falsely imagined that the giving this preference to God before ourselves and all created objects, was a thing possible to human nature in its present state of corruption, unassisted by the grace of God. "And no man after that durst ask him any more questions."

CHAPTER CXVIII.

CHRIST PROPOSES TO THE PHARISEES A DIFFICULT QUESTION CONCERNING THE MESSIAH. MATT XXII. MARK XII. LUKE XX.

"And the Pharisees being" yet "gathered together, Jesus asked them" a question concerning the Messiah:—a question which was the most proper to remove from their minds the bad impression they had conceived at his styling himself the true Son of God, as if this were a blasphemous contradiction of the Unity of God, and incompatible with the mean condition of man. Jesus shows, under the authority of the Scriptures, that the Messiah was not merely a man, but also the real Son of God, and thus he took away the pretext they might otherwise have had to oppose his claim to that sublime title. Wherefore Jesus, after the many questions which had been put to him, thus interrogated the Pharisees in his turn, "saying: what think you of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him, David's." For it was the general belief of all the Jews, that the Messiah would be a lineal descendant of David; that he would gather together the Jews dispersed throughout the world; that he would restore to them their former liberty: restore the kingdom of David his father, then under the power of the Romans, and extend it, by the conquest of all nations, throughout the whole world.

In opposition to this reply of the Pharisees, "Jesus answering, said, teaching in the temple: how do ye

Scribes say, that Christ is the son of David?* For David himself," taught "by the Holy Ghost, doth in spirit call him Lord, saying:" in the book of Psalms,† "The Lord said to my Lord," that is, God said to the Messiah: "sit thou on my right hand till I make thy enemies my footstool." Now a father styles not his son his lord. "If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" This objection, on the part of Jesus, totally disconcerted them; "and no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day ask him any more questions; and a great multitude heard him gladly," and were charmed with his discourses.

The solution of the above difficulty, proposed by our Lord, consisted in giving two natures to the Messiah, viz. the nature of man, according to which David was his father, and the nature of God, according to which he was the Son of God and the Lord of David. Under this quality he had a just claim to sit at the right hand of God, that is, to possess the same glory, majesty, and sovereignty with God himself, being one and the same God with his eternal Father.

CHAPTER CXIX

CHRIST EXHORTS THE JEWS TO OBSERVE THE DOCTRINE, BUT NOT TO FOLLOW THE EVIL EXAMPLE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. MATT. XXIII. MARK XII. LUKE XX.

HAVING thus, in various instances, exhibited proofs of his divine wisdom, Jesus proceeded to lay down rules to the people by which they were to regulate their esteem for the Scribes and Pharisees; at the same time pointing out the various degrees of honour and respect to be shown to his own ministers.

Lest the good opinion, entertained by the people in favour of the Pharisees, should induce them to imitate their vices, and so involve them in the same damnation, Jesus restrains their authority within its just limits, by directing his hearers to consider in them two distinct personages or characters, viz. that of superiors or teachers, and that of private individuals. "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying to them," in his doctrine; "the Scribes and Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses," and have succeeded to his authority of governing the people of God, and instructing them in his law. In this light, respect and obedience are due to their lawful authority, because Moses, or rather God himself, speaks through their mouths. "All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you," if not expressly contrary to the law of God, "observe and do. But" with regard to their private capacity

* St. Matthew relates this as having been said to the Scribes and Pharisees, but according to St. Mark and St. Luke, it would appear as if it had been said to the people likewise. The thing is the same in itself: but it is uncertain which of the Evangelists has given us the very terms which Christ made use of on this occasion.

† Ps. cix. 1.

as individuals, the case is widely different, and therefore, "according to their works do ye not." This advice is the more necessary, as mankind are more inclined to follow the example of their teachers than to practise what they prescribe; and hence whatever the people see done by their superiors, they are apt to consider it as allowable in themselves: because they presume that actions proceed more from the real sentiments of their hearts, than their words and studied discourses.

Jesus gives various reasons why they should not imitate the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. "For they say and do not," says he, "for they bind heavy and insupportable burthens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them;" that is, to the precepts and ceremonies of the law they add a load of human traditions, which by their multiplicity, their inevitable perplexity, the exaggerated interpretations given to them, and their enforced severity, become insupportable to others, whilst they dispense with themselves from paying the least regard to them. "And all their works they do to be seen by men," such as alms-deeds, fasting, prayer, payment of tythes, &c. "Beware of the Scribes who love to walk in long robes; for they make their phylacteries * broad, and enlarge their fringes." These phylacteries were bands or scrolls of parchment, on which were written some sentences of the law, which the Jews were accustomed, to fasten on their foreheads or their arms, to put them in mind of their duty. Thus they interpreted those words of Deut. vi. 8. "Thou shalt tie them as a sign on thy hand," &c. The use of the phylacteries does not seem to have been general amongst the Jews, but was principally confined to those who made profession of greater piety and devotion. Our Saviour here blames the hypocrisy and vanity of the Scribes and Pharisees, who affected to have them larger than others, as well as the fringes which the Jews wore on their garments. Jesus added: "they love salutations in the market-place; and the first chairs in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, and to be called by men Rabbi," or Master: "who devour the houses of widows, under the pretence of long prayers" for their deceased husbands.* Jesus adds in reference to the Pharisees, that "they shall receive greater damnation" for thus abusing so holy a thing as prayer, merely to serve the purposes of their avarice. And then cautioning his disciples against affecting titles and honourable distinctions, he says: "but be not you called Rabbi. For one is your Master, and all you are brethren. And call none your Father upon earth, for one is your Father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called Masters: for one is your Master, Christ." However, as subordination is equally necessary in the Church as

* These phylacteries (that is, observatories) were four paragraphs of the law written in two parchments: the paragraphs were these: first, Exod. xiii. ver. 3 to 10.; secondly, Exod. xiii. ver. 11. to 16.; thirdly, Deut. vi. ver. 4. to 9.; fourthly, Deut. xi. ver. 13.

* These words of Christ probably allude to the avaricious practice of the Pharisees in regard to praying for the dead, since it does not appear how or on what pretext they could drain the purses of widows by long prayers, unless we suppose that these widows had stipulated for the recital of such prayers; nor is it easy to assign a reason why the prayers of the Pharisees should be desired more by widows than the rest of the female sex, unless it were in compliance with the request of their dying husbands.

in every other well regulated community, Jesus, after supposing this, directs, that he who is in the highest station shall yet consider himself as the servant of the rest; "he that is the greatest amongst you," says he, "shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled," either in this life by his fellow-creatures, or in the world to come by the just judgment of the Almighty; "and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." ‡

CHAPTER CXX.

CHRIST VALUES THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES ABOVE ALL THE GIFTS OF THE RICH. MARK XII. LUKE XXI.

After these various disputes and discourses with the Pharisees and others, "Jesus" reposed himself a little by "sitting" down "over against the treasury," which was in a hall near to the gate on the eastern side of the temple, at the place were the two sexes took different roads to go to their respective courts, which were separately allotted to them. As it was his usual practice to draw subjects of instruction from all, even the most minute circumstances, "he beheld" attentively "how the people cast money" and "gifts into the treasury" for the support of the temple. "And many that were rich cast in much: and he saw also a certain poor widow casting in two brass mites,* which is a farthing" of Roman money; being the fruit either of her manual labour, or perhaps of her begging, but which she freely gave on this occasion, not to appear before God empty handed. "And calling his disciples together, he saith to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she out of her poverty hath put in all she had, even her whole living," without reserving any thing for her future subsistence. And therefore, whether the gift itself be considered, the circumstances of the giver, or the disposition of her heart, she may justly be declared to have performed a more meritorious action than others who gave alms to a much greater amount. What a comfort is it to the poor, that they can be more charitable than the rich!

CHAPTER CXXI.

THE THIRD PREDICTION † OF CHRIST CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. MATT. XXIV. MARK XIII. LUKE XII.

It was now late, when "Jesus, being come out of the temple, was going away" to mount Olivet, where he passed the night. And "his disciples

* This may be understood two ways: first, either that the two pieces together make a farthing, which is according to the Syriac; or secondly, that each piece was of the value of a farthing, which appears more probable, because, accord ing to Plutarch in his life of Cicero, *quadrans minimum erat in nummorum genere, eratque 4d. pars assis.*



Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold.

came to show him the buildings of the temple: and some saying of the temple, that it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, one of the disciples saith to him: Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here." And in reality, according to the historian Josephus, the stones of which the temple was built, were equal in whiteness and hardness of alabaster, and were of the immense dimension of twenty cubits long by twelve in breadth, and eight in depth: some of them were even of the length of forty-five cubits. As to its treasures, the spoils taken from the enemies of the Jewish nation, during many ages, added very greatly to the immense riches which were lodged there from its first foundation. It seemed as if the disciples wished on this occasion to divert their Master's attention from the many serious subjects in which he had, during the whole day, been engaged. "Jesus" seized this opportunity to confirm, in yet stronger terms, the prediction which he had uttered on the day of his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and "answering, said to them: do you see all these things? all these great buildings? Amen I say to you: the days will come in which there shall not be left here one stone upon a stone, that shall not be destroyed." This was exactly verified at the taking of Jerusalem, when contrary to the orders of Titus, the temple was burnt and reduced to ashes; and afterwards, in order to destroy the small remaining vestiges of it, when Julian the apostate attempted to rebuild the temple, in despite of Christianity, the very foundations were torn up, and cast out by an earthquake, and the workmen burnt to death by flames which issued from the bowels of the earth.* "And when he was sitting on mount Olivet, over against the temple, the" four "disciples," whom he distinguished by more particular marks of affection, "viz. Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, came to him privately, and asked him apart, saying: Master, tell us when these things shall happen; and what shall be the sign when all these things shall begin to be fulfilled? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the world?"

We must carefully observe, with St. Jerome, that three questions are here joined together, though very distinct from each other. 1. Concerning the destruction of the temple. 2. By what sign they might know that the evils here denounced against the temple, the city, and the whole nation, were near at hand. 3. What sign would precede his second coming at the end of the world? Jesus answers not precisely to the first question of his disciples; but contents himself with stating, in answer to the other questions, the general signs which were to precede the destruction of the city and temple, as also the desolation of the Church by Antichrist at the end of the world. To the last of these ques-

† After this St. Matthew recapitulates the many woes denounced by Jesus against the Scribes and Pharisees. see chap. 83. Others suppose that he may have repeated them on this occacion.

‡ See the first, chap. 101. No. 2. and the second, chap. 169. No. 5, 6.

* The exact accomplishment of Christ's prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, ought to be considered as a striking proof of the truth of what he foretells concerning the destruction of the world at the last day, as we have already observed.

tions he gives a more precise and direct answer, as being the principal, and indeed the only question in which the Church was essentially concerned. Yet as the destruction of the temple was a figure of the desolation of the Church, which is the true temple in which God is served, it so happens, that the signs preceding both these events coincide in a great measure with each other; or rather, that these signs, however distinct in themselves, are explained in the same terms, differing only in the two following particulars. 1. These expressions do not always so well apply to the signs of the figure (that is, to the destruction of the temple), as they do to the signs of the event represented thereby (viz. the desolation of the Church towards the end of the world). 2. These doubtful or equivocal expressions are only continued to a certain point, after which the signs are so clearly and pointedly determined to the principal event thus prefigured, viz. to the desolation of the Church, as to require even a forced interpretation, to apply them to the desolation of the temple.

In this prophecy we are to distinguish, 1. The signs which are applicable to the ruin of Jerusalem and of the temple, as well as to the desolation of the Church at the end of the world; and 2. The signs which refer solely to the desolation of the Church at the latter period.

The first sign common to both these events, is the seduction of many souls from the true faith by heresies. "And Jesus answering, said to them: take heed that no man seduce you; for many will come in my name, saying; I am Christ," (or at least a minister of Christ to teach his doctrine), whilst in fact they maintain a variety of errors condemned by the Church, "and they will seduce many, and the time is at hand: go ye not therefore after them." If this be referred to the first desolation antecedent to the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple, various impostors might here be enumerated who deceived the unbelieving Jews. Of this description was Theodas;* also a certain Egyptian, who persuaded four thousand men to break into open rebellion;† besides several others recorded by Josephus, though not expressly named by him. But as these impostors did not deceive any of the faithful, the prediction which Christ here makes in regard to the Church, seems rather to allude to other impostors, such as Simon Magus, Menander, &c. who engaged several Christians on that side. To these we may add the heresiarchs of the sixteenth century, who, by spreading their erroneous tenets, seduced many, and thus paved the way for that great apostacy which will take place at the end of the world.

The second sign common to both these events shall be wars, rumours of wars, and seditions: "and when you shall hear of wars and seditions," says Christ, "and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled. Fear ye not; for such things must needs be. These things must first come to pass; but the end is not yet presently." In reality, previous to the siege of Jerusalem, from the year 66 to 70, when the city was taken and pillaged, Judea exhibited a constant scene of revolt, sedition, and bloodshed, a particular detail of

* Acts v. 36. † Acts xxi. 38.

which may be seen in the history of Josephus. But as the theatre of war was only in one individual nation and country, one city fighting against another; or, at most, one province against another province, the remainder of this prediction is not so applicable to that period as it is to those wars which are declared to be the forerunners of the end of the world, when whole nations and kingdoms will rise up against each other. "Then, said he to them, nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and pestilences, and famines, and terrors from heaven, and there shall be great signs."

This is the third sign, consisting in many extraordinary revolutions of nature, astonishing earthquakes, plagues, famines, and likewise most alarming appearances and prodigies in the heavens. These prognostics we may apply in part to the ruin of Jerusalem, as appears from Acts xi. ver. 28. Josephus, lib. 20. Antiq. cap. 2. and 3. likewise lib. 7. de Bell. Jud. cap. 12. Eusebius, lib. 3. Hist. cap. 8. However, they more immediately relate to the end of the world, which will unquestionably be preceded by the scourges of pestilence and famine (the usual attendants of war), as also by earthquakes, many of which are described in the Apocalypse. The Almighty, after having punished mankind by the mutual cruelties which they will inflict upon each other in the most bloody wars, will subsequently strike them with the severe scourges of his vengeance, which shall be to all the world as certain prognostics of its approaching dissolution. "Now all these things," says Christ, "are" but "the beginnings of" more dreadful "sorrows."

The fourth sign common to both these events shall be the persecution raised against the Church, and this being the cause of the preceeding signs, must in the nature of things go before them. This persecution will be two-fold; it will regard both body and soul. "But before all these things," says Christ, "they will lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons: but look to yourselves; for they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten, and you shall stand before governors and kings for my name's sake. And it shall happen unto you for a testsmony" against your persecutors, viz. that salvation and the doctrines leading to it have been tendered to them, and obstinately rejected. All this happened to the Apostles previous to the siege of Jerusalem, as well as to the martyrs in subsequent times; and a similar persecution, attended perhaps with additional severity, will probably be the lot of the faithful towards the end of the world.

Jesus next arms his disciples against all dread of their enemies. "Lay it up therefore," says he, "in your hearts, when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, not to meditate before how you shall answer. But whatsoever shall be given to you in that hour" from above, "that speak ye. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy

Ghost. And the brother shall betray his brother unto death, and the father his son; and children shall rise up against the parents, and shall work their death. And you shall be betrayed, to be afflicted by your parents and brethren, and kinsmen and friends; and some of you they shall put to death; and you shall be hated by all men, for my name's sake. But a hair of your head shall not perish," as it shall be amply restored to you at the last and general resurrection. "And then shall many be scandalized, and shall betray one another; and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall seduce; many; and because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of men shall grow cold," when a door will be opened to all wickedness, so that like a deluge it shall spread on every side. "But he that," in the midst of this trying and afflicting scene, shall bear up against the scandals which surround him, against the errors which he sees spread far and near, and against the persecutions which rage on all sides, and "shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved," and shall be crowned with glory. But in the mean time, "in your patience you shall possess your souls." A part of this prediction was undoubtedly accomplished with regard to the faithful in the first persecutions, raised by the Jews against the infant Christian Church; but the entire and literal completion of it is reserved for the latter times.

"And," as a fifth sign, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations," that God has communicated the doctrine of salvation to them with a free offer of his heavenly kingdom; "and then shall the consummation come." But it may be asked, what consummation or end is here meant? If, with St. Chrysostom, we understand it of the final destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, it will in reality be found, that previous to that event, which happened in the seventieth year of the Christian æra, the Apostles had announced the gospel throughout the world, as St. Paul writes, Rom. x. "But I say: have they," the Jews "not heard? Yes verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the whole world." He also witnesses, Coloss. i. 6. that "the gospel is in the whole world:" and ver. 23, "the gospel which you have heard, which is preached in all the creation that is under heaven." However, although to justify these expressions, it suffices that the gospel had been announced throughout the major part of the known world, yet it appears not to have been so spread at that period, as to justify its being said, in the strict sense and utmost latitude of the words, that the whole extent of the universe had then partaken of this signal favour. If, on the contrary, with St. Jerome, we refer these words to the end of the world, we see, in these our later times, the light of the gospel conveyed to America, a portion of the globe which the Apostles did not visit. There is moreover the greatest probability that, before the end of the world, the southern parts of the globe, and all those nations in general which are now in the darkness of infidelity,

will be enlightened with the true faith, or, at least, that previous to that period, the true faith will have been announced to them.

Jesus next proceeds to the siege of Jerusalem, as an infallible prognostic of its approaching desolation. "And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet,* standing where it ought not," that is, in the holy place, "he that readeth let him understand." The abomination here alluded to most probably means the horrible profanation of the temple caused by the false zealots, who were divided into three factions against each other, and by whom even the two sanctuaries were most shockingly polluted. Others expound this of the standards of the heathen Roman army, on which were impressed the images of certain emperors who had been ranked in the number of the gods, and which were adored by the soldiers. Titus caused these standards to be elevated on high in his camp, to oppose them as a kind of temple to that of Jerusalem, and after he had entered the city, they were placed on the ruins of the temple, and the soldiers offered sacrifice to them, as mentioned by Josephus. But with regard to the end of the world, we may explain this abomination (which is followed by desolation) of that great apostacy foretold by St. Paul, who viewing it with respect to the apostatising Christians, styles it a revolt,† and with respect to God, a cutting off, as being a just punishment upon those Gentiles who shall not have continued steadfast in a state of grace and virtue, so as to answer the expectations of the Almighty, by whom they have been so highly favoured.*

In consequence of this abomination of desolation, and the dreadful persecution which follows it, Jesus advises the faithful to seek their safety by flight. "Then let those who are in Judea,† flee to the mountains; and those who are in the midst thereof, depart out; and those who are in the countries, not enter into it. And let him that is on the house top, not come down into the house;‡ neither let him go in, to take any thing out of the house. And let him that shall be in the field, not turn back to take up his garment. Remember Lot's wife," who, in punishment of her looking back at Sodom, not without some regret at its destruction, was instantly changed into a pillar of salt. "Whosoever," by worldly precautions, "shall seek to save his life, shall lose it," by falling into the hands of his enemies: "and whosoever shall lose it," by forsaking all the conveniences of life, "shall preserve it," because divine Providence will extend his all-wise care and protection over him

But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath.§ For

* Chap. ix. ver. 27.
† 2. Thes. ii.

* Rom. xi. 22.

† St. Austin says (in his 80. Ep.) that Christ here enjoins the faithful to save themselves by a precipitate flight, and he adds, that agreeably to this injunction the first Christians quitted Jerusalem and the neighbouring country, and took refuge in the city of Pella, situated in Traconitis, on the further side of the Jordan, and subject to king Agrippa, an ally of the Romans.

‡ The Jews had usually stairs on the outside of their houses, and therefore there was no occasion to throw themselves from the roof, as Mauduit, &c. seem to suppose.

§ That is, according to St. Austin (Quæs. Evang. lib. 1.

these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written. But wo to them that are with child and give suck in those days; for in those days shall be such tribulations as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, neither shall be.* For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword; and shall be led away captives into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the nations shall be fulfilled. And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh should be saved:† but for the sake of the elect which he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days; that is, unless these days of vengeance on the Jews, which will begin at the siege of Jerusalem, and continue with more or less violence till the second coming of the Son of Man, had been shortened in their favour, not one of this people would have been saved (literally all flesh, that is, the last remains of this people would have been exterminated): but for the sake of the elect whom he hath chosen from the remnant of this people, these days will be shortened.

q. 37.,) pray to God, the disposer of all things, that nothing on this occasion may be a hindrance to you; for winter, rain, and cold, and the Sabbath, are inconvenient for travelling. The law of the Sabbath, indeed, which allowed only a journey of one mile and a half, did not oblige, in the case of necessity, when life was in danger: but many of the Jews did not admit this exception, and few of the converted Jews conceived themselves free from the obligation of the Sabbath before the destruction of Jerusalem. St. Austin likewise explains these words in a moral sense: let no one on that day be found oppressed with sadness, or dissipated with joy on account of temporal goods, the loss or enjoyment of which is to be reckoned as nothing.

* It appears by St. Luke, that this is to be understood of the ruin and desolation of the Jews, as St. Austin remarks (Ep. 80.) The miseries which overwhelmed that obstinate people, and of which Josephus has left us a circumstantial account, appear almost incredible. Within the town there was nothing but murder, faction, famine, and the plague; and without, all was destroyed by fire and the sword. See Josephus. However, all that is here said of the desolation of Jerusalem and of the temple, may be easily applied to the last ages, and therefore it is considered by many as a figure only of what will be realized at the end of the world.

† This may be explained in a more general sense, as relating to the persecution of Antichrist, which will be dreadful beyond description, and executed in every part of the world. The time however allowed to him and his bloody agents, *to tread under foot the holy city*,† that is, the Church of Christ, will not extend beyond *forty-two months*, or three years and a half. This space of time Christ has set apart to purify his Church, and to try his servants; and therefore he allows them to fall under the power of this merciless tyrant: *and it was given unto him*, says St. John, speaking of this event, *to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.*§ We are admonished of the same by the prophet Daniel, chap. vii. ver. 21. *I beheld*, says he, *and lo that horn*, Antichrist, *made war against the saints, and prevailed over them.* And again: and *he shall speak words against the Most High*, and *shall crush the saints of the Most High*—and *they shall be delivered into his hands until a time, and times, and a half time*,‖ that is, a year, two years, and half a year, or three years and a half, which agrees with St. John. St. Austin, speaking of this dreadful period, says: "this persecution will be the last; it will happen towards the approach of the last judgment, and will fall upon the Church in every part of the world; that is, the whole city of Christ will be persecuted by the whole city of the devil, as far as both are extended upon the earth. (De. Civit. lib. xx. cap. 11.) The barbarous tortures employed in the primitive persecutions by Nero, Domitian, Diocleslan, &c. will now be revived, and even exceeded by the cruelties of this last persecution. But happily, amidst this frightful prospect, there shines a ray of comfort; for these extreme difficulties and rigorous trials, this war and slaughter, which if continued would sweep away the whole race of mankind, shall *be shortened*, as our Saviour informs us, that is, contracted to three years and a half, *for the sake of the elect*, or out of regard for his faithful and beloved servants; and then he himself will descend from heaven, and as St. Paul tells us, will *kill that wicked man* Antichrist with the breath of *his mouth, and shall destroy* him with *the brightness of his coming.* Various have been the sentiments both of the ancients and moderns concerning this final period, but the most prevailing opinion fixes it about the end of six thousand years. This, however, is totally uncertain, and as to the *precise day* of judgment, our blessed Saviour assures us, that *no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father.*

† Apoc. xi. 2.

§ Apoc. xiii. 7.

‖ Dan. v. 25.

CHAPTER CXXII.

JESUS CHRIST FORETELLS THE SIGNS AND EVENTS PREVIOUS TO HIS LAST COMING.
MATT. XXIV. MARK XIII. LUKE XXI.

AFTER having thus described the desolation of the Church, Jesus proceeds to speak more directly of Antichrist, and of the end of the world. Foretelling the coming of Antichrist, he warns the Christians of the latter ages to be upon their guard against seduction. "Then if any man shall say to you: lo here is Christ, or there: do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show great signs and wonders, in so much as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Take you heed, therefore, behold I have foretold you all things. If therefore they shall say to you: behold he is in the desert; go ye not out: behold he is in inner rooms, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even into the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be," for he will immediately appear in all his glory, and will destroy the wicked as a thunderbolt which follows the flash of lightning almost instantaneously. "Wheresoever the body" * of Christ "shall be," that adorable victim, immolated for the salvation of mankind, "there also shall the" elect as spiritual "eagles," accustomed to feed on his sacred flesh, "be gathered together" with incredible swiftness. To this St. Paul seems to allude where he says: 'We shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord.'* "And immediately after the tribulation of those days, there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: the sun shall be darkened, and the moon" of course, "shall not give her light, and the stars shall" apparently "fall from heaven," because their light shall be extinguished; "and the powers of heaven shall be moved," † and shaken to their very foundations. "And upon the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves: men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven," that is, the cross

* Others, as Mauduit, understand by the *body* (in Greek *ptoma* a carcass,) the soul of a reprobate, and by the *eagles* the devils, who are ever ready to seize on their destined prey.

* 1 Thess. iv. 16.

† St. Austin (Ep. 80.) gives us an allegorical explanation of what is here said of the sun and moon. The sun denotes Jesus Christ, the moon the Church, which will appear as involved in darkness on account of the dreadful persecution raised against the faithful. The stars that fall, are the just overcome by this severe trial. The powers of the heavens represent by their shaking the wavering of Christians hitherto steadfast in the faith. By the *powers of heaven*, Estius understands the devils in the air, but Tirinus with more probability, the powers, the foundations or hinges as it were of the heavens, all which will exhibit by their disorder dreadful symptoms of an expiring world. We must observe that these signs will be *before* and not *after* the general resurrection, as St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom seem to have thought. This appears from St. Luke xxi. 26. and from Joel ii. 31 See A. Lapide.

shining brighter than the sun: "and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn; and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet and a great voice; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the furthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads: because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude," pointing out in general terms, the time of his last coming. "See the fig-tree, when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves are come forth: and the same as to all the" other "trees, when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye, that it is very nigh, even at the doors," and "that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, that this generation" of the faithful "shall not pass until all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." We must consider this promise as a solemn and explicit assurance given to his Church, that, in spite of all the heresies and persecutions foretold above, it shall infallibly continue until the end of the world, and even that the heavens and the earth will sooner pass away than this his Church shall fail. "But of that day or hour," says Christ, "no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father." As a check to the fruitless curiosity of those who wish to know the precise day and hour of the last coming of Jesus Christ (the signs of which are given above in general terms) he here declares this secret to be unknown not only to all mankind and to the angels in heaven, but even to the Son of Man himself, considered merely as to his human nature. It is however certain, that Jesus Christ, even as man, knew the day of judgment and all things to come, by a knowledge inseparable from the union of his human nature with the divine person;* and to attribute any ignorance to Christ, would be the error of the Agnoetai. But though as man he knew the day of judgment, yet this knowledge was not due to him as he was man, or because he was man, but because he was God as well as man. "In natura quidem humanitatis novit diem et horam, non ex natura humanitatis novit; ideo scientiam quam ex natura humana non habuit, in qua cum angelis creatura fuit, hanc se cum angelis habere denegavit."† The holy Fathers, in answer to the Arians who objected this passage, reply, that Christ here speaks to his disciples only as he was the embassador of his Father, and so he is said only to know what he is to make known to men. He is said not to know, says St. Augustin, what he will not make known to others.

Jesus proceeds to describe the extreme surprise and astonishment of mankind at his last coming, which he explains by two apposite figures drawn from the Old Testament. "And as" it was in the days of Noe," says he, "so shall also the" second "coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the

* See Coloss. ii. 3.
† St. Greg. l. 8. Ep. 42

days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in in which Noe entered the ark; and they knew not till the flood came, and took them all away. So also shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and built. And in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed;" he will come to judge the world when least expected, and will render to every one according to his works. "I say to you: in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken" for heaven, "and the other left" for hell. "Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken" in like manner, "and the other shall be left; two men shall be in the field, the one shall" also "be taken, and the other shall be left. They answering, say to him; where Lord" shall these things come to pass? "Who said to them: wheresoever the body" of the Son of Man "shall be," thither will "men" as quick "as eagles be gathered together" at the resurrection, to hear from his mouth the judgment he will pronounce, and to receive at his hands either the recompence or the punishment which they shall have merited by their works.

CHAPTER CXXIII.

MEDITATION, WATCHFULNESS, AND PRAYER RECOMMENDED. MARK XIII. LUKE XXI.

FROM the uncertainty and ignorance of the time when these great events are to take place, Jesus draws three consequences of extreme importance to all succeeding Christians, but more especially to those of the latter ages of the world.

The first is constantly to meditate upon these serious truths. The second, to be ever watchful over ourselves, lest our hearts become attached to the empty toys of this world, the paltry pleasures of the table, or be oppressed by the cares and solicitudes of this life. Thirdly, he exhorts us to join to this watchfulness a constancy in prayer. "Take heed," says he, "watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand" with confidence "before the Son of Man." He particularly insists on watchfulness, and says that he shall act in our regard, "even as a man who going into a far country, left his house and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the por-

ter to watch" faithfully until his return, that so by his authority he might prevent the other servants from being idle, the slaves and bondsmen from being idle, the slaves and bondsmen from running away, strangers from being admitted to interrupt their work; and lastly, that he might prevent all robbers and thieves from breaking into his premises.

The man who is here represented as taking a distant journey is Jesus Christ, who has ascended into heaven. His house is the Church, in which there are various offices and employments: these he has distributed amongst his servants, constituting some as bishops, others as pastors and preachers of his holy word, with that regular subordination and authority which are necessary for the duly performing of the various functions of the ministry. This distribution is general, and there is not an individual member of the house of God, however mean and contemptible, to whom Jesus Christ has not intrusted some office in relation to his brethren, though it extend no further than the obligation of giving them edification by a holy life. It is highly probable that the porter here represented as holding the keys of the house, is no other than the successor of St. Peter, who is established over the other officers or bishops, purposely to take care that none of them neglect their respective duties, and that nothing either go out or come into the house which may tend to corrupt those who are the members of Christ's family. From this comparison Jesus infers the necessity of watchfulness. "Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock crowing," (about three or four o'clock) "or in the morning" at sunrise: "lest when he comes on a sudden, he finds you sleeping," that is, neglecting your duties, indulging habits of idleness, or oppressed with the cares and solicitudes of this world. "And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch."

If it be asked, why Jesus Christ here requires of all a constant watchfulness, since it seems to regard such only as shall live in times immediately preceding his last coming, and not others who having long before ended their mortal course, shall no longer be within the possibility of being surprised by him? St. Austin, in his eightieth letter, makes answer, that to each individual Christian, the day of his death is the day of Christ's second coming, and that in whatever state a person shall be found at his departure out of this world, in that he shall be judged at the last day, because when once separated from the body, the soul continues in the same state without alteration. Whence it matters little, whether our soul be judged at the first leaving the body, or at the distance of many centuries, since her lot will depend solely on the state in which she is found at the precise moment of her leaving this world. This consideration should oblige every Christian to be always watchful over himself, and to keep his conscience pure, lest he be surprised unawares by the coming of Jesus Christ, since, from the uncertain tenure of human life, it must be a profound secret, whether his master will return in the evening, at midnight, at the cock

crowing, or at sunrise; or, in other words, whether death will surprise him in old age, in manhood, or in youth; in any of which a surprise must be equally fatal, and attended with endless misery.

CHAPTER CXXIV.

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS. MATT. XXV.

IN this parable, under the figure of ten virgins, Jesus describes the faithful in this mortal pilgrimage. By the bridegroom we are to understand our Saviour Christ, by the bride, his Church, by the virgins, the faithful in general, and by the oil in their lamps, the necessary qualifications of grace and charity joined with divine faith. "Then shall the kingdom of God," said Christ, "be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride.* And five of them were foolish and five wise. But the five foolish having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil † in their vessels with their lamps. And the bridegroom making delay, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight ‡ an outcry was made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering said: Amen I say to you, I know you not."

In this parable, under the figure of virgins, are represented all the faithful during their mortal pilgrimage. Their souls are virgins with respect to the Catholic faith, which is pure and exempt from all corruption of error; they are appointed to go forth with their lamps to meet the bridegroom, because their business is to walk by the light of faith, and to be always ready for the coming of Christ their heavenly bridegroom. The lamps with which they are furnished are to be kept burning with the oil of such good works as the gospel recommends. Where this oil is wanting the lamps are extinguished, because "faith without good works is dead." The unwise or the foolish souls are such as content themselves with an outward profession of the faith, and with a certain show of decency in their morals, without giving themselves any concern about the love of God and the practice of solid piety. Whilst persons of this descrip-

* It may be proper to describe the custom to which our Saviour seems here to allude. When the bridegroom was to bring home his bride (which was generally the conclusive ceremony, and done in the night time) the young women of the town, in order to do her honour, went to meet her with lighted lamps: she too had her companions and servants attending her from her own place of abode. Modern travellers inform us, that amongst the eastern people, especially the Persians, this mode still prevails of conducting the bride home with lamps and lighted torches.

† That is, laid up in store for themselves a good foundation of works.

‡ To show that he will come when least expected.

tion are satisfied with an apparent piety, and with the performance of such works as serve only to gain the empty applause of mankind, wise souls, on the contrary, not content with a fair outside which may please the eyes of men, are ever careful to treasure up a store of good works, such as are truly acceptable to God, and meritorious of eternal life.

The delay of the bridegroom represents the time of this life, and even the whole course of succeeding ages to the day of judgment, when Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, will return. During this interval the virgins not only slumber, but also give themselves entirely up to sleep. The slumber which precedes the sleep of the expecting virgins, represents those sicknesses which precede death, and their sleep is death itself, from which they will be awakened at the general resurrection of mankind. The sleep, therefore, here described, is not to be understood of a blameable drowsiness contrasted with the watchfulness which our Lord recommends in the close of this parable, because even the wise virgins slumber and sleep equally with the unwise, nor are they censured for so doing.

At midnight a sudden and great cry awakens these virgins, who are summoned to go forth and to meet the bridegroom. This denotes the sound of the last trumpet, which will summon the dead to arise from the sleep of death and to appear before Jesus Christ. Thus the resurrection of the body is represented by the awakening of the virgin; and the wise as well as the unwise prepare their lamps, that is, they pass over in review the several actions of their respective lives, of which they are instantly to give a strict account to the sovereign Judge. But the foolish souls, sensible that the faint light of human applause, which in this life added a lustre to their actions, is now going to be extinguished in the great day of God's justice, and that the false glitter of an apparent virtue cannot stand the test of the judgment of truth, would willingly obtain by any means a supply of oil from the other more wise souls, that is, a portion of their meritorious good works, upon the principle of the communion of saints, which is the foundation upon which the Catholic doctrine of indulgencies is established. But the time for obtaining such indulgencies is now passed; and repentance and sorrow come too late, and nothing is to be expected but a strict and just retribution to each one according to his works. These foolish virgins therefore, who have neglected to provide themselves in time with the oil of good works, will have no resource left, but will condemn their extreme folly in not having made the necessary preparation for so important an emergency. The bridegroom comes and takes along with him to his wedding feast such only as he finds ready, and against the rest the door is shut, never, never to be opened. The conclusion is obvious, that it extremely behoves us all to be watchful and earnest in the practice of good works, and not to postpone them to distant times which are not in our power; because nothing is so uncertain as the hour of death, which in our regard is the time of Christ's coming to decide our eternal lot. "Watch ye therefore," says Christ,

"because you know not the day nor the hour."

CHAPTER CXXV.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN TALENTS.* MATT. XXV.

THE design of this parable is to show the necessity we lie under of labouring in good earnest, each one according to his talent and employment. "A man," says our Lord, "being about to take a journey into a foreign country, called his servants and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two,, and to another one; to every one according to his respective capacity. and immediately he took his journey." The man here spoken of, represents Jesus Christ our Lord, who by his ascension is gone to heaven. But "ascending on high he gave gifts to men:"* for he has plentifully distributed his goods and talents among his servants, to the end that they may trade with them, and improve the stock during the time of his absence, till he shall come again and take an account of their good or evil management of their trust. All that we have either as to soul or body, nature or grace, is derived from him, and deposited in our hands as a kind of talents for which we are, one day, to be accountable.

We are next to consider the different use which these servants made of their master's money. For "he that received the five talents, went his way and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that received two gained other two. But he that received the one, going his way dug into the earth and hid his Lord's money. But after a long time the Lord of these servants came and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents behold I have gained other five over and above. His Lord said to him: Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And he also that had received the two talents, came and said: Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me: behold I have gained other two. The Lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. But he that had received the one talent, came and said: Lord, I know that thou art a hard man, thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and thou gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth: behold here thou

* Eph. iv. 8.

* This parable has a great affinity with that mentioned by St. Luke, chap. 106. concerning the ten pounds or marks, and the scope of both is much the same. This however was spoken at a different time, in a different place, and on a different occasion. It differs likewise as to certain circumstances. A talent is 187*l.* 10*s.* sterling.

hast that which is thine. And his Lord answering, said to him: Wicked and slothful servant, thou didst know that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou ought therefore to have committed the money to the bankers, and at my return, I should have received my own with usury. Take ye therefore the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound:* but from him that hath not," what he ought to have, "that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness" of hell. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The condemnation and punishment of this slothful servant is a striking warning to all those Christians who having received talents, that is, gifts, graces, or advantages of any kind, from God, do not employ them to his greater honour and glory, and to their own and their neighbour's improvement, but through sloth and indolence let them lie unregarded, and as it were hidden and buried in the earth, even in this unhappy earth of the world and the flesh, which engage all their thoughts and their affections, more than the honour and glory of their Lord, or the eternal welfare of their own souls.

CHAPTER CXXVI.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE LAST JUDGMENT. MATT. XXV. LUKE XXI.

The foregoing parables manifestly tend to excite in us the most earnest watchfulness, under the just apprehension of the strict account which hereafter we must give of our respective talents. Jesus, therefore, naturally concluded these parables by a description of that tremendous day which succeeds the final reckoning, and which will unalterably fix our abode either in eternal happiness or in eternal misery. In this description we are to remark, 1. The preparations for this awful scene: 2. The sentence pronounced by the Judge: 3. The execution of this sentence.

"And when the son of man shall come in his majesty, and all his angels with him," as the ministers of his justice, "then shall he sit upon" a bright cloud as "the seat of his majesty; and all nations," by the ministry of angels, "shall be gathered together before him," as the sovereign Ruler and Judge of all mankind. This scene will probably take place near Jerusalem, in the valley of Josaphat,† which adjoins to mount Olivet, where Jesus began to suffer, and whence he ascended glorious into heaven. Hence the two angels who, on that occasion, appeared to the Apostles, assured them that he would come again from heaven in the same manner as they had seen him at his ascension. On that final day the Judge "shall separate them

* This shows that God never requires of men more than he has enabled them to perform.

† Joel iii. 2.

one from another," that is, the elect from the reprobate, in the same manner "as the shepherd," in the evening, "separates the sheep from the goats," which during the day have ranged in the same pastures. "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left;" that is, he will cause the just to be taken up into the clouds to meet him, as described by St. Paul,* and leave the reprobate upon the earth, to receive their eternal doom. We are therefore to consider the terms of the right hand and of the left, as metaphors; the former of which is designed to give us the idea of a distinguished rank, the latter that of a place of malediction. The reprobate are described under the character of goats, a wanton, unclean, and impetuous animal; the elect under that of sheep, on account of their patience, their mildness, their simplicity, and their innocence. "Then shall the King," seated on his throne, "say to them that shall be on his right hand," with a serene countenance: "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you," as your inheritance, "from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me." In assigning the reason why the elect are put in possession of this eternal kingdom, Jesus mentions only one species of good works, viz. the works of mercy, though others may be equally meritorious: for the means of salvation are not precisely the same for all the saints; some are saved by poverty, others by solitude, and each by that virtue which he shall have practised in the greatest degree of perfection. This description of the last judgment seems therefore particularly to be addressed to Christians engaged in the cares of the world, whose salvation principally depends on the practice of the works of mercy. "Then shall the just answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry and fed thee? thirsty and gave thee drink? and when did we see thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked and covered thee? or when did we see thee sick or in prison and came to thee? And the king answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren," your fellow Christians, "you did it to me."* The question here proposed by the elect to their Judge, and his reply, are thus painted in words adapted to their ideas, and are meant only to describe the thoughts of profound admiration and astonishment which will fill the elect on account of this goodness of Jesus, in vouchsafing to consider whatever they have done to the poor as done to himself. "Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand," with fire in his eyes, and terror in his countenance: "Depart from me, ye cursed," and hated of God, "into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." The fire of hell was not, properly speaking, enkindled for the punishment of

* 1. Thess. iv. 16.

* Can there be a more forcible motive to charity, than that the Son of God, should accept all good offices done to the afflicted as done to himself?

the human race, man was created subsequently to the fall and to the damnation of the rebel angels; and though he imitated their prevarication, yet by the blood of Jesus he has been redeemed from eternal punishment. If many, notwithstanding, are yet condemned to never ending flames, they are punished under the quality of slaves of the devil; for as they have wilfully followed his rebellious example, they must expect to share with him in his punishment. The reason assigned by the Judge for this dreadful sentence of damnation, is, that they have neglected those works of mercy which they ought to have performed towards Jesus Christ, in the persons of his necessitous members. "For I was hungry" he will say to them, "and you gave me not to eat: * I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you covered me not: sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also shall answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?" Hence they will plead, that this is a calumnious charge, and ought not to operate towards their condemnation. "Then he shall answer them," by a voice which shall speak to the inmost recesses of their consciences, "saying: Amen I say to you, inasmuch as you did it not to one of these least, neither have you done it to me."

There will, doubtless, be an infinite number of other crimes not here noticed by Jesus, which will draw down upon sinners the terrible sentence of damnation. He here only alleges the neglect of one sort of good works, as an inducement to us to be zealous in the practice of them; but at the same time he gives us sufficient grounds to argue with ourselves in the words of St. Austin. If a mere neglect of the works of mercy will occasion the damnation of numberless Christians, what will be the sentence pronounced against those who are guilty of so many positive flagrant crimes? If they, who have neglected to afford assistance to their distressed neighbour, will most assuredly be condemned to the flames of hell, how can others expect to escape these flames who shall have committed against their neighbour the greatest outrages? The sentence shall no sooner be pronounced than executed, "and these" wicked wretches "shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting." Yes, the reprobate shall be consigned to everlasting burnings; the abyss of hell shall open under their feet, and they shall be precipitated into it, surrounded by those raging flames which shall have consumed the whole material world. Whilst, on the coutrary, the elect shall follow Jesus Christ to everlasting glory, and with him shall enjoy for ever the kingdom of his Father.

On a recapitulation of this long discourse, we may observe, that in the first place it treats of those wars and persecutions which are to happen in the latter ages of the world; that it then proceeds to describe the heresies and schisms among Christians; the general propagation of the gospel; the

† Christ suffers his members to want, in mercy to them, and that others may have an opportunity of showing their love for him, and that we may make amends for our sins by our alms.

great apostasy at the time of Antichrist; lastly, it concludes with the grand scene of the day of judgment. Thus these events are intimately connected with each other, and all materially regard the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER CXXVII.

THE SECOND COUNCIL* HELD BY THE JEWS AGAINST JESUS. MATT. XXVI. MARK XIV LUKE XXII.

"Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, was at hand, and it was to be after two days. And the chief priests and Scribes," more and more irritated against Jesus by the parables which he had spoken on the preceding day, "sought how they might, by some artful contrivance, seize him and put him to death. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished all these discourses, he said to his disciples; you know that after two days is to be the Passover, and" during this solemnity, "the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests and the elders of the people into the court of the high priest who was called Caiaphas: and they consulted together, that by subtlety, they might apprehend Jesus and put him to death. But they feared the people," who considered him as a great prophet, "and they said, not on a festival-day, lest perhaps a tumult should happen amongst the people." † But this was over-ruled, when Judas informed them how he could and would put him into their hands on Thursday night. Wherefore, at a time highly favourable to their designs, "Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve" Apostles, and suggested to him the certain reward he might obtain of the sanhedrim by delivering up Jesus into their hands. With this view "Judas went to the chief priests that he might betray him to them. And he discoursed with" them "and the magistrates, how he might" effect this without any seditious disturbance among the people. "And he said to them: what will you give me, and I will deliver him up to you? Who hearing it, were glad and" willingly "promised to give him money. And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver," which is about three pounds fifteen shillings of English money, and which was the price of a slave, as appears from Exodus xxi. 32. This sum, though small, might be sufficient to buy the potter's field, as mentioned hereafter, because it is probable this field was in the most wretched condition, and the best of the soil had been taken out of it. "Wherefore Judas" promised "to deliver up to them his Master for this

* This meeting was on the Wednesday, and because on this day Judas sold Christ, and the Jews decreed his death, hence arose, according to St. Austin (Ep. 36. t. 3. p. 80.,) the ancient custom of fasting on Wednesdays. It was a still more general custom to fast on Fridays, because on that day Jesus suffered death for our redemption. This latter custom prevailed in England till the year 1777.

† St. Matthew and St. Mark place after this the feast of Bethania: but this they do by recapitulation, because this was the occasion of Judas's betraying our Lord.

trifling consideration. "And from that time he sought for an opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude." Judas was influenced to undertake this horrid treachery by a variety of motives, but chiefly by that of avarice. He judged it a favorable opportunity to indemnify himself for what he considered as a real and weighty loss, when the precious ointment was poured out upon Jesus at the feast of Bethania; and to secure this indemnification, he scrupled not to contract for the life of him who had been the object of this pious profusion. As to the remorse of conscience which must necessarily have attended so foul an ingratitude, Judas most probably would endeavour to smother it by the reflection, that although he might betray Jesus into the hands of his enemies, he would yet be able to escape from them with ease, as he had witnessed upon former occasions at Nazareth and in the temple. Hence he was willing to believe, that the blood of Jesus would not be laid to his charge, whilst at the same time he might safely reap the profits of his treachery to both parties, viz. to Jesus, by shamefully betraying him, and to the Jews, by their obtaining possession of a person, who in all probability would not fail to escape from them. Few look upon the sin of covetousness to be so great and dangerous as it really is, yet here we see it was the occasion of the greatest sin that ever was committed.

PART VI.

CONTAINING THE ACTIONS AND DISCOURSES OF CHRIST, FROM THE FOURTH PASSOVER* TO HIS TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

CHAPTER CXXVIII.

THE PASCHAL SUPPER. MATT XXVI. MARK XIV. LUKE XXII.

THE ensuing Thursday was the fourteenth day of the Moon, the eve of the Passover, on which, according to the law, the paschal lamb was to be sacrificed, as is clear from the three Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. "And on the first day of the azimes," or of unleavened bread, "on which it was necessary that the Passover should be killed, the disciples came to Jesus, saying: whither wilt

* See the first Passover, chap. 19; the second, chap. 37; the third, chap. 58.—The first was after the marriage feast, of Cana, in the 31st. year of Christ, 26 of the vulgar æra, 779th from the foundation of Rome.—The second, third, and fourth, succeeded each other in the three following years. The first three are mentioned only by St. John, in chap. ii. 13. chap. v. 1. chap. vi. 1. The fourth is mentioned by all the Evangelists Matt. xxvi. 17, Mark xiv, 12. Luke xxii. 1, John xii. 1, and chap. xiii. 1. Wherefore as Baronius observes (*ad* an. 34, § 146.) it is now generally

thou that we go and prepare for thee to eat the Passover? * And he sendeth Peter and John, saying: go and prepare for us the Passover, that we may eat. But they said: where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said to them: go ye into the city, and behold at your entering into" it "a man shall meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him to the house which he goeth into. And wherever he shall enter, say to the good man of the house: the Master saith to thee, my time is near at hand, with thee I make the Passover with my disciples: where is an eating room, or guest-chamber, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished, and there prepare ye for us." The Evangelists prudently suppress the name of the person, who was probably then living, lest he and his family might on that account be exposed to the fury of the Jews. "And his disciples went their way, and came into the city, and they found as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover, as Jesus appointed to them. And when the evening was come, he cometh

acknowledged by the moderns, that from the baptism of Christ to the time of his death, four Passovers intervened. Irenæus indeed mentions only three, because his object was merely to refute those who limited the time of Christ's preaching to one year. It is a mistake, as St. Austin observes (in Joan. Trac. 55.), to derive *Pascha* from the Greek word *paschein, to suffer;* it is certainly taken from the Hebrew, and signifies *a passing by*, or *passing over*. Yet it must also be observed, that this same word *pascha*, or *Passover*, has different significations. It is used sometimes for the *paschal lamb* that was sacrificed, Luke xxii. 7.; elsewhere for the first day of the paschal feast and solemnity, which lasted seven days, Matt. xxvi. 2. Ezech xlv. 21. Again, for the *Sabbath-day* that happened within the seven days of the solemnity, Jo. xix. 14, and also for all the sacrifices made during the seven days' feast.

* With regard to this fourth and last Passover there exists among the learned a great diversity of sentiments. The first and most generally received opinion is, that Christ ate the paschal lamb with his disciples on Thursday in the evening, the 24th of March, and then instituted the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the night before he suffered death. The second opinion, adopted by the modern Greeks, to justify their custom of celebrating with leavened bread, supposes that Christ, foreseeing his death, celebrated the Passover, and consequently instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist, the day previous to the appointment of the law, when the Jews were allowed to eat leavened bread. The third is of those who acknowledge, indeed, that Christ celebrated on the day appointed by the *law*, but assert that the Passover was this year transferred by the Jews to the following day of the Sabbath. This is the opinion of Paul of Burgos, Paul of Middlebourg, Grotius, Cornel, Jansenius, Scaliger, Estius, Mauduit, &c. The fourth is of those who pretend that Christ wholly omitted the legal or paschal supper, and instituted only the eucharistic supper, by the consecration and distribution of his body and blood. This last opinion was first started by Marcion the heretic, and is condemned by Epiphanius (Hær. 42.) It was again broached by Philoponus, an abettor of the Eutychian heresy, in the sixth age, and after being laid aside for many years, was revived in the beginning of the seventeenth century by Vecchietti, who on that account was, by order of the inquisition, thrown into prison, where he remained for many years. This opinion was considered as repugnant to the truth of holy scripture, to the authority of the Church, and to the doctrine of the fathers, as is mentioned by Janus Nicius Eurythræus, part i. num. 114. At Rome it is still held in detestation, and in France and Spain is rejected as bordering upon heresy. See Witasse, Dr. of Sorbon, and Suarez in 3 P. D. Thomæ, t. 2. disp. 40. where he condemns it too dogmatically in these words: hæc sententia est plane hæretica. Lamy, however, ventured afterwards to maintain the same opinion in his Evangelical Harmony, and was followed by Thoynard and Calmet. Their arguments have been abundantly refuted by several learned men, viz. by Graveson, in his Dissertation *on the mysteries and years of Christ*, by Honore of St. Mary, tom. 2. by Tillemont, and lastly, by Plamyoen, who has expressly written against Calmet. See also Benedict 14. in his treatise on *the feasts of Jesus Christ*.

The first opinion is here adopted as the most ancient, and the most generally held by the holy fathers, both of the Greek and Latin Churches, as Calmet himself acknowledges. See Origen in his 35th treatise on St. Matt. St. Chrysostom, hom. 85. on St. Matt. and hom. 82. on St. John, whose sentiment, according to Photius (Biblioth. cod. 116.) was universally followed by the Greek Church. Whence it appears, that the modern Greeks have ignorantly receded from the ancient usage of their Church, under the pretence that Christ anticipated the day of the Passover prescribed by the law. As to the Latin fathers, see St. Jerome on the 26th chap. of St. Matthew, St. Austin, 36. c. 13, and without referring to the other fathers, the council of Trent, sess. 22. chap. 1, where, speaking of the institution of the holy sacrifice of the mass, it declares, that "after celebrating the ancient Passover, immolated by the children of Israel, in memory of their going out of Egypt, Christ instituted the new Passover, viz. himself to be offered under visible signs, in memory of his going out of this world to his Father." Hence the Church sings in the Pange lingua:

'Twas on that ev'ning, when the last
And most mysterious supper past;
When Christ with his disciples sat,
To *close the law with legal meat;*
Then to the twelve himself bestowed
With his own hands to be their food.

In St. John there are two or three difficulties relating to this subject, which will be explained in their proper places.

with the twelve, and when the hour was come," viz. at sunset, "he placed himself at table * and the twelve with him. And he said to them: with desire I have desired to eat this" Jewish "Passover with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled" by the real Passover "in the kingdom of God." He here alludes to the master-piece of his power and of his love for mankind, viz. the institution of the adorable mystery of the holy Eucharist, and the meaning is, that this was the last Jewish Passover which he should eat with his disciples before he realized the figurative lamb by the true one, that is, himself, which he was about to substitute in its place. After the Paschal lamb was eaten in due form, "Jesus having taken the chalice," according to the usual custom, "gave thanks" to his heavenly father, because the time of shadows and figures was now passed away, and having tasted it, he gave it to his disciples, "and said: take and divide it among you.† For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come;" that is, this was the last time Christ would drink wine, till the kingdom of God should appear by the miraculous change of wine into his own sacred blood, this being in reality one of the most astonishing instances of the power and controul of the Almighty over the creation. In these words, therefore, is implied a a promise of the holy Eucharist, which Jesus is now about to fulfil, after the previous ceremony of washing his Apostles' feet.

The Jewish Passover was the most solemn rite of the old law, appointed by God as a lasting monument of the deliverance of his people from the destroying angel, and the cruel slavery of Pharaoh.* The Israelites were directed to offer in sacrifice an unspotted lamb, and to sprinkle their door-posts with the blood of the victim, as a sign for the exterminating angel to pass over their houses, while he slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne, unto the first-born of the captive woman that was in prison. After this last plague, the stubborn heart of Pharaoh relented; dreading the total extermination of his people, he hastened the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt with all possible expedition. Amid the general desolation of that night (for there was not an Egyptian house without a dead body), the Israelites were preserved unhurt, owing to the blood of the paschal lamb. This was a great mystery, says St. Chrysostom, an admirable figure of Jesus Christ, the true lamb of God, who was to be offered up in sacrifice for our redemption from sin and hell, and with the sprinkling of whose blood our souls are rescued from the slavery of the infernal Pharaoh, and from the

* Literally laid down in a leaning or lying posture. According to the Thalmudists, it was a matter of indifference whether the paschal supper was eat in a sitting or standing posture; and therefore no argument can be drawn from this circumstance against our Lord's eating the paschal supper. Besides, he might stand when eating the paschal lamb, and eat the rest of the supper on a couch, as was the usual custom of the Jews. See Luke, chap. vii. John, chap. xiii. and chap. xxi.

† By these words Jesus did not institute the Holy Eucharist, as St. Austin conjectures, but only concluded the paschal supper; for the same Evangelist, St. Luke, speaking a little below of the consecration of the chalice, viz. ver. 20. says: *in like manner* also "taking" the chalice, after he had supped, he said: "this is the chalice of the New Testament in my blood which shall be shed for you."

* See Exodus, chapter xiv.

second and eternal death. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, says St. Paul.* When God ordered the Israelites to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon their door posts, it was not from any need he had of this sensible mark to discover the victims of his wrath; it was solely with the view of signifying, that the blood of the true Lamb would be the distinguishing character or mark to discriminate the children of Israel, whom he appointed to save, from the children of Egypt, who are devoted to destruction. Let us therefore with St. Paul,† bear about in our body the dying of Jesus, and the impression of his blood, if we would escape the divine wrath and the infernal destroying angel that seeks our ruin. Every thing in the paschal lamb was mysterious and prophetical. A bone was not to be broken, and they brake not the legs of Jesus Christ on the cross.‡ The lamb was to be without blemish, to express the perfect sanctity of Jesus Christ the immaculate Lamb of God. The paschal lamb was to be sacrificed and eaten, because Christ was to suffer and die for us; and unless we eat his flesh, we shall have no life in us. The door posts of the Israelites were to be sprinkled with blood, that the destroying angel might pass over them, for with the blood of Christ our souls are to be purified, that sin and death may not prevail against us. In every house was eaten a whole lamb, and Christ at communion is received whole and entire by every faithful soul. From the manner in which the paschal lamb was to be eaten, we may learn the dispositions of soul in which we ought to come to the Christian Passover. The lamb was roasted with fire, to express that fire of divine charity with which we are to approach to Christ in the holy mysteries:—it was eaten with unleavened bread; therefore, says the Apostle,* "let us feast not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The bitter herbs, prescribed for eating the paschal lamb, signify that wholesome bitterness of repentance and contrition for sin with which we are to come to the Lamb of God. The loins girt, and feet shod, denote the girding up of the loins of our soul, by resolutely restraining our passions and lusts, and that our feet, that is, the affections of the soul, are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,† that is, with a readiness of heart to follow in all things the rules of the gospel, as the only way to true peace. The staff in the hand shows that we are to reckon ourselves as pilgrims in this world, who have no lasting dwelling place here, and that therefore we are to make the best of our way to our true country, the heavenly Canaan.

* 1 Cor. v. 7.
† 2 Cor. iv. 10.
‡ Jo. xix. 33.

* 1 Cor. v. 8.
† Eph. iv. 15.

CHAPTER CXXIX.

JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS APOSTLES. * JOHN XIII.

Of the four Evangelists, St. John is the only one who relates the washing of the Apostles' feet, preparatory to the institution of the holy Eucharist. This was on the evening "before the festival-day of the Passover," when "Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end," leaving them in the blessed sacrament which he was going to institute, and which breathes nothing but love, an eternal monument of his most tender affection. "And" therefore, "when supper was done," in which he ate the typic paschal lamb with his disciples, ("the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him): knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and goeth to God" again, with a full and absolute power to dispose of all things, he resolves upon the performance of that master-piece of his power and goodness, the institution of the blessed Eucharist; and with the view of preparing his disciples for the worthily receiving of so august a sacrament, "he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his" upper "garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself, after the manner of a servant. "After that, he putteth water into a bason, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." In this transaction we may observe how Jesus enforces the necessity of the purification of our interior, and recommends by his own example, the practice of charity and of humility to all his followers. The necessity of this purification appears from the tenour of his discourse with Peter. "He cometh therefore," first, "to Simon Peter, and Peter saith to him: Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him: what I do thou knowest not" the meaning of "now, but thou shalt know hereafter.† Peter," struck at such an humiliating condescension, "saith to him: thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: if I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me." It is thus that Jesus describes the communion of his body and blood, or the holy Eucharist; and the purport of his words is, that as Peter was not in that due state of preparation requisite for worthily re-

* This washing of the feet took place before the institution of the Eucharist. The Jews made two suppers at the festival of the Passover: the first was ceremonial, at which, according to the ordinance of the law, the paschal lamb was eaten with unleavened bread and wild lettuce. The second was the usual or ordinary supper; for as the lamb was not a sufficient supper for any great number of persons, who sometimes amounted to twenty, and could not be less than ten, it was followed by the usual supper. It was after this second supper that Christ washed his disciples' feet, previously to the institution of the holy Eucharist.

† We cannot at present understand the reason of all God's commands and revelations: it is sufficient for us to know, that a time will come when we shall know them all to be righteous, reasonable, and necessary to be believed adored, and obeyed.

ceiving this august sacrament, so, unless he submitted to the required purification, emblematically figured by the washing of his feet, he should be debarred from partaking of that sacred mystery. "Simon Peter," although he did not yet fully comprehend the meaning of what Jesus proposed to him, was, however, sensible that this washing of his feet was something mysterious, and therefore declares his full assent to it, and "saith to him: Lord not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: he that is washed" in a bath, "needeth not but to wash his feet" at coming out, "being clean all over;" it is the dust alone, unavoidably adhering to his feet by his touching the ground, which must be shaken off, or cleansed away; in other words, the soul, which is in the state of righteousness, however just she may be, yet stands in need of grace, as of a living water, to purify the heart and affections from that dust or dirt which is unavoidably contracted in our commerce with the world. Jesus then added: "and you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: you are not all clean. Then, after he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, being set down again," he endeavoured to make them sensible of the advantages and fruits to be derived from this humble ceremony which he had just performed. The first fruit to be gathered from it, was an imitation of his humility, of which he gave them so striking an example; "and he said to them: know you what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord and you say well; for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." * This is not to be understood as extending merely to the outward ceremony of washing the feet of our brethren; but is likewise complied with in a spiritual sense, when we pardon them the faults which they commit against us, and when by our prayers, our advice, our fraternal corrections, and especially by the example of a virtuous life, we contribute all in our power to cleanse the affections and ameliorate the conduct of each other. He confirms the reason drawn from his own example in these terms: "Amen I say to you: the servant is not greater than his Lord: neither is the apostle greater than he that sent him." Since therefore, in this instance, I your Lord and Master have so far humbled myself as to perform towards you, my servants and Apostles, an office of so mean and humble a nature as that of washing your feet, how can, you my disciples, with propriety refuse to perform a similar office to each other, or consider yourselves debased by so doing? He adds, by way of conclu-

* This passage shows that the holy Scripture is to be understood according to the *sense and tradition of the Catholic Church*. How shall a person, who is guided only by the words of Scripture, distinguish between *this* and the precept for celebrating the holy Eucharist? Why, may he say, should one be observed and not the other? In both cases the command seems equally positive and equally clear. The words: *do this in remembrance of me*, seem not to imply a stronger precept than these; *you ought to wash one another's feet*; *I have given you an example that you should do what I have done to you*. Exclusive therefore of the practice and tradition of the Church, this washing of feet "would have been looked upon as a standing sacrament in the Church of Christ," as Bishop Wilson admits. The truth of it is, that, however Protestants may *decry tradition, they cannot totally discard it, and are forced to have recourse to it upon some occasions*, says Dr. Brett. See his treatise, *Tradition Necessary*.

sion: "if you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them;" for the knowledge of virtue, without the practice, avails nothing. Then making an exception as to the traitor Judas, he said: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen" for eternal happiness; "but" I tolerate others of a different description, "that the Scriptures may be fulfilled: he that eateth my bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me."* Jesus had hitherto fulfilled that part of the prophecy which regarded his conduct towards Judas, in having given him his bread and maintenance; but he is now about to extend his bounty to him infinitely further, and to heap coals upon his head, by imparting to him his own sacred body for food, in company with the other Apostles. He shall lift up his heel; this being the most distant part of the body, represents the last stroke which Judas was then meditating to inflict upon him at parting, as a farewell blow, which was no less than to deliver him into the hands of his enemies.

Jesus calls the attention of his disciples to this prediction: "At present," says he, "I tell you before it comes to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe that I am he," viz. the Son of God, and the eternal wisdom of the Father. He would hereby convince them that he was not taken by surprise, though at the moment they did not understand what he had expressed only in general terms.

As to the silence of St. John, respecting the institution of the holy Eucharist, it may easily be accounted for from the circumstance of its having been sufficiently recorded by the other Evangelists. Yet he gives us the recital of Christ's washing the feet of his Apostles, as a preparation for this divine sacrament; at least this is the most easy and rational construction we can give to the above ceremony, and to the several circumstances preceding it.

The second fruit to be gathered from the ceremony of washing the feet of the Apostles, concerns principally the ministers or pastors of the Church. For as Christ washed their feet to dispose them for the communion of his body and blood, he clearly gives them to understand, that they should voluntarily offer themselves to the office of cleansing the faithful from their sins, by the sacrament of penance, before they impart to them the sacred mysteries. With a view to this duty, he tells them that he has set the example which it behoves them to imitate.

The third fruit to be derived from this ceremony, regards all the faithful in general, who may hence learn to preserve their baptismal innocence with the greatest care; but if, previously to their approaching to the heavenly banquet of Christ's sacred body, they contract some spiritual stains to be washed away in the sacrament of penance, these stains, like those of the Apostles, should only be in the nature of a little dirt or dust, which our feet unavoidably contract; that is, they are to be but slight venial faults, such as are inevitable in our commerce with the world, and not like that base perfidy and treason of Judas, who, though in the state of

* Psalms xl. 10.

mortal sin, and just on the point of betraying Jesus into the hands of his enemies, yet impiously dared to partake of his precious body and blood, in company with the other Apostles.

CHAPTER CXXX.

CHRIST INSTITUTES THE HOLY EUCHARIST. MATT. XXVI. MARK XIV. LUKE XXII.

AFTER eating the paschal lamb and washing his disciples' feet, Jesus proceeded to the institution of the holy Eucharist; and this he did, "whilst they were" yet "at supper," in order that the truth or reality might succeed to the figure in one and the same banquet. He chose, moreover, to conclude the last supper with this divine sacrament, in order more deeply to impress upon the minds of his disciples the remembrance of so singular a favour. "Jesus," therefore, "took" into his sacred and venerable hands unleavened "bread," this only being at hand, and what the law prescribed to be eaten with the paschal lamb.* "And" lifting up his eyes to heaven,† "he gave thanks"‡ to his heavenly Father for the almighty power bestowed on him over all created things, so as to render them subservient to his greatest mysteries: "and" holding the bread in his hands, "he blessed it" by some particular form or gesture, to engage the attention of his disciples to what he was going to perform, "and he broke" it into thirteen pieces, for that was the number at table; or perhaps he might break off a portion or share, as he distributed it to each; which he might the more easily do, as the unleavened bread was made in a flat shape; "and he gave to his disciples" there present, not excepting even Judas,* "and said: Take ye and

* Exodus xii.

† This circumstance we learn from tradition. See the liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, &c.

‡ Hence the holy sacrament is called the *Eucharist*, which in Greek signifies *thanksgiving*, both in reference to the thanksgiving of Christ on this occasion, as likewise to that grateful thanksgiving with which we are always to receive this wonderful pledge of our redemption. This sacrament has many other names, such as the Christian *sacrifice*, or *sacred Host*, because it contains Jesus Christ, the host or victim who was slain and offered for us. It is called the *blessed* and the *holy sacrament*, by reason of its supreme excellence; the *sacrament of the altar*, because performed upon the altar; the *holy table*, because it is in the nature of a spiritual feast, in which Christ nourishes us with his own body and blood; the *holy communion*, because by it Jesus Christ communicates and unites himself to us, and we, as his members, are united to one another by this bond of charity; the *viaticum*, because it strengthens us in our earthly pilgrimage, and at the hour of death unites us to Jesus Christ, our light, our guide, and our strength in the way to eternity. But none of these various names, nor all of them together, can adequately express the innumerable excellencies of this adorable mystery. It is here Christ has displayed, in a wonderful manner, his infinite wisdom, his infinite power, and the riches of his love. The Church calls it the perpetual pledge of our Saviour's passion, the abridgment of his sacred mysteries, the greatest of all his miracles, our singular comfort in his absence, and the accomplishment of the greatest figures of the old law. Christ would not institute this sacrament in the beginning of his ministry: he would first prepare his disciples for the belief of it, by turning water into wine, and performing innumerable other miracles before them during the course of his ministry.

* This is the received opinion of all the holy Fathers, if we except St. Hilary. Dominus traditorem suum tanta patientia pertulit, ut ei Eucharistiam, Sicut cæteris Apostolis, traderet. St. Aug. Trac. 62, in Joan.

N. B. In speaking of the real presence in the Eucharist Catholics hold that Christ is *corporally* and *substantially* present, but not *carnally*; that is, not in that gross, natural, and sensible manner in which Protestants misrepresent our doctrin

eat:" for "THIS IS MY BODY * which is given for you;" that is, which will be offered up for you in sacrifice upon the cross, or which is now offered up and distributed to you. This second meaning is more conformable to the Greek text of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. xi. 24. *To uter umon klomenon*, quod pro vobis frangitr,) that which is now broken to be given to you. But the former sense agrees better with the vulgate (quod pro

* These words are so plain, that it is difficult to imagine others more expressive of Christ's real presence in the holy sacrament. The force and import of them will however appear in a still stronger light, if we consider the formal promise which Jesus had made to his disciples, as related by St. John, ¶ (see chap. 59.) viz. that he would give them his flesh to eat, that same flesh which he was to deliver up for the life of the world. He on that occasion confirmed, with a remarkable emphasis of expression, the reality of this manducation, assuring them, that his *flesh was meat indeed*, and *his blood drink indeed*; and when some were shocked at such a proposal, he still insisted that unless they ate his flesh they should have no life in them; the possibility of it he evinced from his divine power, and his miraculous ascension into heaven; the necessity of it he established by permitting those to abandon him who refused to believe it; and the belief of it he enforced on the minds of his disciples from the consideration that he their teacher was the Son of God and the author of their eternal salvation. The Apostles were deeply impressed with these thoughts previous to the institution of the Holy Eucharist; consequently, when they beheld Jesus Christ, just before his death, take bread into his sacred hands; when, after blessing it with solemnity, they heard him say: *Take, eat, this is my body which shall be given for you*; they must necessarily have concluded, that it was truly his body which he now gave them to eat, according to his former promise. And though their reason or senses might have started difficulties, yet all these were obviated by their belief of his being God, and consequently able to do whatever he pleased, and to make good whatever he said. Moreover, if we consult tradition, we shall find that the Greek as well as the Latin church, has uniformly declared in favour of the literal sense of Christ's words, as may be seen at large in Bellarmine, Perron, and other controvertists. The learned author of the *Perpetuite de la foi*, and his continuator Renaudot in the two additional volumes, have invincibly demonstrated that the belief of all the oriental Christians perfectly coincides with that of the Catholic Church respecting the real presence. This point seems now to be so well ascertained, that obstinacy or ignorance can alone call it in question. Dr. Philip Nicolai, though a Protestant, candidly acknowledges in his first book of the Kingdom of Christ, page 22, "that not only the churches of the Greeks, but also the Russians, and the Georgians, and the Armenians, and the Judeans, and the Ethiopians, as many of them as believe in Christ, hold the true and real presence of the body and blood of the Lord," &c. This general agreement among so many churches of the Christian world, affords the strongest evidence against Secker and other Protestants, who pretend that the doctrine of the real presence is a mere innovation which was not started till seven hundred years after Christ's death. For how will their supposition accord with the belief of the Nestorians and Eutychians, who were separated from the Church of Rome long before that period, and who are found to agree exactly with Catholics concerning this important point? This alone forms a decisive proof against the figurative sense adopted by the Sacramentarians, and evinces that the doctrine of the real presence was always the doctrine of the Church, and derived by tradition from the Apostles themselves. It is, indeed, inconceivable how this belief of the real presence could ever have gained admittance in the Christian world, had it not been received from the beginning as a doctrine revealed from Jesus Christ, and delivered by him with the other revealed truths to his Apostles. For in the supposition of Protestants, that the doctrine of the real presence was an innovation first broached in the fifth, sixth, or seventh century, (for they do not agree among themselves,) it must certainly, at its first commencement, have appeared to have been a *new doctrine*, as never having been heard of before; consequently it must have been considered as *false* and *heretical*, being diametrically opposite to what all the Christian world are supposed to have firmly believed as a revealed truth: it must have appeared even as a *dangerous heresy*, because directly leading to idolatry, and teaching that they ought to adore as God, what they and all their predecessors, from the time of the Apostles, believed to be nothing but bread and wine. Lastly it must have been looked upon as altogether *incredible*, because contrary to the testimony of the senses, and directly opposite to that faith which is supposed to have obtained among all Christians. If at all times we learn from ecclesiastical history, the least innovation, the slightest departure from the received tenets, occasioned disputes and contests, if every heresy, however obscure or speculative, was combated at its first appearance, can we imagine that this doctrine of the real presence, which involved in its nature a point of daily practice as well as of faith, which proposed to Christians, as an object of inward and outward adoration, what in their former estimation it was idolatrous to adore, can we imagine, I say, that so important a doctrine, without noise or disturbance, gently insinuated itself into the minds of all Christians, and that no historian either perceived it in himself or others, to transmit the account of it to posterity? Can they who believe this, find any difficulty in believing mysteries of any kind whatever, that of transubstantiation not excepted?

¶ If Protestants, in opposition to the primitive Fathers, deny the connection of the sixth chapter of St. John with the institution, it is "*from the fear of giving advantage to the doctrine of transubstantiation*," says Dr. Clever the Bishop of Bangor. Dr. Porteus, in his lecture on the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew affirms, that "nothing is more evident than that these words of Christ, *This is my body*, signify, *This represents my body*." But I appeal to the impartial reader, whether a bit of bread evidently and naturally represents the body of a man. Moreover, how does this confidence of assertion accord with the general belief of Christendom, four parts in five of which understand the words of Christ not in the figurative but the literal sense. It is in vain therefore to pretend the evidence of Christ's words in favour of such an assertion. In fact, "whilst the institution is considered as a *memorial* only, nothing can well be further from being plain," says Dr. Clever, the Bishop of Bangor, in his Sermon on the Lord's supper.

vobis tradetur), which shall be delivered for you. Jesus then empowered his disciples and their successors to perform the self-same thing which he had done, with a grateful sense and lively remembrance of his sufferings for them. "Do* this," said he, "for a commemoration of me;" † that is, as often as, in imitation of me, you consecrate bread and wine into my body and blood, do it with a grateful remembrance of my passion and death. And this injunction extends to all ages, for as often says the Apostle, (1 Cor. xi. 26.) as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come again to judge the world. Jesus "in like manner, taking the chalice after he had supped," proceeded to the consecration of the wine. St. Luke had omitted the circumstance of the time in the recital of the consecration of the bread, but he here states it to show, that the eating of the paschal supper, according to the old law, was now terminated, and that in its stead he instituted the great sacrament and sacrifice of his body and blood. Jesus then "gave thanks" to his heavenly Father, and blessed the chalice,* hereby indicating that the effect to be produced upon the wine was distinct from that which he wrought upon the bread. To show his union with all the members of his mystical body, Christ partook first of the consecrated cup,† as he had done already of the consecrated Host: he then "gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this,‡ for this is MY BLOOD," and the seal "of the New Testament" (or the New Testament in my blood) "which shall be shed for many to the remission of sins:" to which we must add these words recorded by St. Luke, which were unquestionably spoken by Jesus Christ: "This is the chalice, the New Testament in my blood, § which shall

* The ancient and universal practice of the Church in mingling a little water with the wine, is probably derived from the example of Christ, since it has always been observed from the days of the Apostles. See St. Justin, Apol. 3. St. Irenæus, l. 5. c. 2. St. Cyprian, Ep. 63. and Cæcil, &c. The scripture however neither mentions the water nor the wine, but only that he gave them the cup. Those who have written on the sacred liturgy observe, that this mixture of water and wine is designed to represent, 1. The union of the human and divine nature in the person of the Son of God. 2. The union of the faithful with Christ their head. 3. The water and blood which flowed from the side of Christ.

† Hence Protestants pretend that Christ's body and blood are not really and substantially present in the Eucharist. But the futility of this objection will manifestly appear, if we consider that the Eucharist, as believed by Catholics, is a much more lively remembrance of Christ, than as held by Protestants. For Catholics, who hold transubstantiation and the real presence, and who firmly believe that as often as they partake of this sacrament, they really receive the same body of Christ that was crucified for them, the same blood of Christ that was shed for their redemption, do certainly renew in themselves the remembrance of our Saviour's death and passion with more lively sentiments of devotion than Protestants, who believe that they receive only a little bread and wine in their *natural substance* in remembrance of him. The outward forms of bread and wine which remain in the Eucharist, are chiefly designed to signify or represent to us three things, viz.: 1, *The Passion* of Christ, of which they are the *remembrance;* 2ndly, *the body and blood of Christ* really present, of which they are the *veil;* 3rdly, *Everlasting life*, of which they are *the pledge.*

* The chalice made use of on this occasion is said by Bede, or whosoever was the author of the book *On holy Places*, (chap. 2.) to have been of silver, with two handles, and to have been kept at Jerusalem in his time. See Baronius ad. an. 34.

† Ipse conviva et convivium, ipse comedens et qui comedetur. St. Jer. Ep. ad Hedib.

‡ It would seem from the text of St. Mark as if Christ said these words which follow, not before but after the Apostles had drank; but it was certainly otherwise, as is clear from St. Paul, who gives a more circumstantial account of this sacred institution, which he says he received from our Lord himself. See 1 Cor. xi. 25.

§ This is a beautiful and striking allusion to what Moses did at the institution of the Israelitic covenant, when pouring the blood of victims into basins, he said: *behold the blood of the covenant*, Exod. xxiv. 8. This furnishes therefore another strong argument in favour of the real presence. For when Moses said: *this is the blood of the Testament.* (Heb. ix. 20.) he did not speak of blood in figure, but of the true and real blood of animals which had been poured into the basins. In like manner, when our Lord, at his last supper, said: *this cup or chalice is the New Testament in my blood*, he speaks of his true and real blood which was then in the cup; for as the old covenant was made in the

be shed for you" on the cross, as the ransom to be paid for the redemption of the world. In the Greek, this is expressed by the present tense, and refers to the cup; so that the exact and literal translation would be, which cup is shed for you; hence it is proved, that the blood of the New Testament was then really and truly in the chalice, and that the effusion of the chalice into the mouths of the Apostles, was a real and perfect sacrifice. "And they all drank of it," * not excepting even Judas. Jesus now declared to them, that as this was the first time of his drinking his blood with them, so likewise it would be the last time until after his resurrection. "And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforwards of this fruit of the vine" (meaning his own blood, he being the true vine, as he is about to inform them), "until that day when," being renewed by my resurrection, "I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father:" * or perhaps he gives them to understand, that the blessed Eucharist, which they had just received, was in the nature of a foretaste which would hereafter be followed by a new, glorious, and eternal banquet, prepared for them in the kingdom of heaven.

In confirmation of what has been noticed above, respecting this great mystery of the Eucharist, we may observe how every circumstance relating to its institution, manifestly tends to prove the real presence of Jesus Christ, and that his words are to be taken in

blood of the ancient victims, so was the new made in the blood of Christ. Now let us, for a moment, suppose with the Sacramentarians, that instead of the sacred blood of Christ, there was only wine, it will then follow, that Christ made his covenant, not in his own blood, but merely in a figure of it, just as Moses had done. For the blood of the victims in which the old covenant was made, under Moses, was confessedly a figure of the blood of Christ, and even a more expressive figure than wine. Consequently in this supposition of the figurative sense, the essential difference between the new and old covenant is done away, the eucharistic cup has nothing superior to the Mosaic rite, and that blood which Christ declares to be his own blood, and which, he says, is *shed for the remission of sins*, is not in reality the blood of Christ, any more than the blood of bulls and goats, which *could not take away sins*. Heb. x. 4.

* That is, all the Apostles. The Blessed Virgin was not present on this occasion, as Tillemont observes, from the authority of St. Austin. This appears also from the Evangelists, who make mention only of the twelve. No argument can be deduced, therefore, from this text, to prove the necessity of communicating in both kinds. To receive the blessed sacrament under *one* or *both kinds*, has always been considered by the Church as a point of mere discipline, and therefore it has varied according to the exigencies of time, place, and persons. See in the *Essay for Catholic Communion*, the acknowledgments of Protestants on this head. We must observe, that the holy Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice. As a sacrifice, it is an offering made to God which must always be performed under both kinds, for the mystical representation of Christ's death; as a sacrament it may be administered to the faithful under one or both kinds, as the Church thinks proper, without any injury to the receiver: for the body of Christ cannot now be received without his blood, nor his blood without his body: consequently, whoever receives under one kind receives as much as if he received under both, that is, he receives Christ whole and entire, true God and true man.

* From St. Luke it appears, that Jesus said this immediately after the paschal supper, before the consecration of the bread and wine: but after the example of St. Austin, we have not thought proper to transpose the order of St. Matthew and St. Mark, who place it likewise after the consecration of the chalice. According to Mauduit, Toinard, and others, these words were spoken at two different periods: 1. As a notification to his disciples, that he would no more drink wine until the establishment of the kingdom of God, or in other words, until the institution of the blessed Eucharist; and 2. To denote, that he would not again drink his blood with them before his resurrection, which is also the time of God's kingdom. According to this opinion, which we have adopted, Christ called his blood the *fruit of the vine*, because he gave them his blood under the appearance of wine, as St. Paul calls the body of Christ *bread*, because given under the appearance of bread. 1 Cor. xi. 26.—N.B. Jesus Christ, in consecrating the bread and wine into his body and blood, made use of the same words which have been employed ever since by his ministers, viz. *This is my body;* &c. See Tertullian (lib. 4. adversus Marcionem, cap. 40.), St. Thomas (3 P. Q. 78. Ar. 1.), and the council of Trent, sess. 13. chap. 1. Mauduit however, with some few others, falsely supposes that our Lord previously, by his hidden blessing performed this miraculous change. In the form of consecration used by the Catholic Church, there is used the conjunction *for*, which according to St. Thomas, may have been derived from tradition—*shall be shed* FOR MANY. St. Luke and St. Paul, instead of *many*, say *for you*, and both are joined in the canon of the mass. St. Euthymius observes, that *for many*, has the same meaning as for *all mankind;* for the new alliance was made with *all*, the former with the Jews only.

their obvious and literal sense.—The time of the institution; it was that very night when Jesus for the last time, addresses his Apostles, previous to his undergoing a cruel death. A time when all persons are disposed to speak in the most clear and unequivocal manner.—The situation of Jesus Christ; in respect to his Apostles, he is a tender father, who makes his last will and testament. This should ever be done in the plainest terms. Does a wise man recur, on such an occasion, to unusual figures of speech? Does he say, for instance, that he bequeathes a diamond, when he intends to bequeath only the figure or representation of a diamond?—The quality of Jesus Christ; he is a Mediator between God and man, who is to form an eternal alliance. Such an alliance we may well suppose, would be expressed in the clearest language. The very action itself which Jesus Christ performs; it is a most sacred and solemn rite, which is to last to the end of the world. The least ambiguity, therefore, would be attended with the most dangerous consequences. Jesus Christ the sovereign Pontiff, is perfectly holy: he has in abomination every species of false and idolatrous worship. Yet might he not be justly charged with having given occasion to it, if on this solemn occasion, he had delivered himself in obscure, figurative terms, which he foresaw would be misunderstood by far the greatest part of the Christian world? The affection of Jesus Christ, manifested on this occasion; he testifies the most ardent love for his children; he bestows on them the greatest of benefits; "having loved his own, he loved them to the end." * His power is not inferior to his love: "knowing that the Father hath given him all things into his hands." * To such Almighty power nothing can seem hard or impossible. But the very words of Jesus Christ, simple, clear, and perfectly adapted to the great action which he was performing, alone furnish the strongest proof imaginable, especially if their connection be considered with what he was going to do and suffer for mankind. "This is my body which shall be delivered for you," and consequently my true and real body, about to be crucified, and not a figure of it. "This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many" on the cross. Admitting that Christ intended to give us his body and blood, could he have made use of words more clear and perspicuous than these: This is my body, this is my blood? How then will those Christians dare to present themselves before the awful tribunal of Jesus Christ, who, with the unbelieving Capharnaites, refuse to give credit to his words? He positively declares: "This is my body," and they boldly deny it, and maintain it to be only the figure and representation of it. A Catholic, on the contrary, may confidently say to his Judge, with simplicity: O Eternal Truth! I have believed what you declared by three Evangelists, and by St. Paul: This is my body, this is my blood. I have believed the words of Jesus Christ: I have believed the Church, the Spouse of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is truth itself; the Church is the pillar of truth. I am, therefore, perfectly satisfied and assured that my faith is right, and this faith I will

* St. John xiii. 1.

* St. John xiii. 3.

boldly confess before the Sovereign Judge of the living and dead.

It may not be improper to subjoin here a short account of the feast of Corpus Christi, which is kept in honour of the holy Eucharist. The Church, indeed, always celebrated with solemn thanksgiving, the institution of this adorable sacrament on Maunday Thursday in Holy Week; but as that time is mostly employed in commemorating the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, it was judged expedient to appoint a proper solemn festival in honour of so adorable a mystery. This feast began first to be celebrated in the diocese of Liege, in the year 1246, and was afterwards extended to the whole Church, by Pope Urban IV., who, in his bull, dated an. 1262, fixed it on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday; commanding it to be observed with a solemnity equal to the four great festivals of the year. After extolling the immensity of God's love, and the riches of his bounty, as displayed in this sacred mystery, he exhorts all the faithful, by their extraordinary devotion on this day, to repair, if possible, the blasphemies of heretics against it, and to make amends for all former tepidity in assisting at mass, or in receiving the holy communion. It is certainly incumbent on all true lovers of Christ, to testify the grateful sense which they entertain of this wonderful institution, and especially on this day, to make all possible atonement to his most amiable injured charity. With the same view let us, at other times, frequently unite ourselves to the choirs of angels who render to Jesus continual respect and adoration in this holy sacrament; let us approach the holy communion with the most lively devotion; let us ever assist at the sacrifice of the mass with the greatest fervour and assiduity; let us visit and adore Christ on the altar as on his throne of mercy; and let us ever behave in his sanctuary with the most awful respect and reverence; saluting devoutly the holy sacrament with these or similar aspirations of love and praise: "May Christ be ever adored and praised in the most holy sacrament of the altar."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER CXXX.

As the Holy Eucharist contains the most material points of controversy, now agitated between Catholics and Protestants, the following observations are subjoined with the view of elucidating the Catholic doctrine, and obviating the prejudices and misrepresentations suggested against it, either by ignorance or malevolence. In the foregoing chapter, the real and substantial presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine, has been proved by the words of the institution, as well by the authority of the Greek and Latin Church in all ages down to the present time. It remains, that we now examine the other points of Catholic faith respecting this mystery; and it will be found, that they flow

from the foregoing doctrine as its necessary consequences.

1. The adoration of Christ in the Eucharist. I shall not dwell on this point, since the most learned and intelligent of our adversaries have long since acknowledged that those who are persuaded of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, may and ought to pay him their adorations. For as Mr. Thorndike justly observes, (Epil. l. 3. c. 30.) "I suppose the body and blood of Christ may be adored wheresoever they are. I do believe it was so practised and done in the ancient Church." See St. Cyril of Jerusalem, (Cat. 5 mystag.) Gregory Nazianzen, (in Or. fun. Soror. Greg.) "The angels minister at the table, the King of heaven is present, therefore adore and communicate," says St. Chrysostom, (Hom. 3. in Ep. ad Eph.) I cannot quit this subject without adverting to the calumnious charge brought against Catholics by the late Archbishop Secker in his thirty-sixth Lecture on the Church Catechism. After several ungenerous misrepresentations of the doctrine of Catholics, he asserts, that to erroneous belief they have added "idolatrous practice: worshipping on their knees a piece of bread for the Son of God. Nor are they content to do this themselves, but with most unchristian cruelty, curse and murder those who refuse it." Let us coolly and impartially examine whether this horrid imputation be well founded. The Doctor admits in the same place, that Catholics firmly believe the bread and wine to be turned into the body and blood of Christ. Now whether they are right or wrong in this their belief, it is evident that the object of their worship is not a bit of bread, but Christ himself, the author and finisher of their faith, who died for their sins, and rose again for their justification; consequently their act of adoration cannot be idolatry. For as the learned Bishop Taylor observes, in his Liberty of prophesying, Sec. 20. Num. 26. "Idolatry is forsaking the true God, and giving divine worship to a creature or an idol, that is, to an imaginary God. Now it is evident, that the object of their (the Catholics) adoration, in the blessed sacrament, is the only true and eternal God, hypostatically joined with his holy humanity, which humanity they believe actually present under the veil of the sacramental signs. And if they thought him not present, they are so far from worshipping the bread in this case, that themselves profess it to be idolatry so to do: which is a demonstration, that the soul has nothing in it that is idolatrous; the will has nothing in it, but what is a great enemy to idolatry; and nothing burns in hell but proper will." This is the judgment of a Protestant prelate, "who," as Knox says, "stands among the divines of England, like Shakespeare among the poets, in proud preeminence;" and who in candour, generosity, and liberality of sentiment, is certainly not inferior to the abovementioned Archbishop of Canterbury.

2. The doctrine of transubstantiation may likewise be inferred as a necessary consequence of the real presence. For by transubstantiation we mean nothing else but a change of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ, the outward form of bread and wine still remaining unal-

tered for the exercise and merit of our faith. Now if the words of Christ's institution imply a real and substantial presence of his body and blood, as we have already proved, the bread and wine must either be changed or remain together with his body and blood, as the Lutherans maintain. But this latter supposition is inconsistent with the obvious meaning of Christ's words. For in taking the bread into his hands, he did not say: here is my body, but this is my body, which nothing but a substantial change of the bread could make really and literally true: because the word this, pointing precisely at what he held in his hand, viz. bread, if it continued bread after, as it was before the words of consecration, the proposition would have been absolutely false. This change the Catholic Church has thought fit to express by the word Transubstantiation, and those who reject this term, because not found in the scripture, ought for the same reason, to reject such words as the Trinity, Incarnation, or Consubstantiality, which no where occur in the sacred writings. Archbishop Secker, with several other Protestants, goes so far as to deny the possibility of transubstantiation. But this is, in fact, denying the omnipotent power of God, since it denies God the power of destroying a bit of bread and of concealing a human body under its appearance. What rashness is it in man thus to set limits to the power of the Almighty! Most assuredly, as St. Ambrose reasons, the same infinite power which made all things out of nothing, can change one thing into another, and as easily reproduce the same body in a different place, as it can destroy any created body and produce the same again. The mystery of transubstantiation,* it is true, surpasses the contracted limits of our understanding; so does the mystery of the Trinity and of the Incarnation: but the difficulties arising from their incomprehensible nature, ought to have no weight with sincere Christians against the positive word of God. "It is certainly highly unreasonable to deny our assent to the truth of any thing, or the reality of its existence, merely because the manner of its existing is unknown," says Collyer in his Sacred Interpreter. For "the works of God," says St. Gregory, (Hom. 26, in Evang.) "would not be the subject of our wonder, if they could be comprehended by our reason; nor has that faith any merit, where it has experience to demonstrate it." Shall vain and self-conceited Sciolists pretend to penetrate the deep things of God, when the most common operations of nature are obscure to us, and elude the investigation even of the greatest philosophers? In religious matters, "the bare testimony of revelation," says Mr. Locke, "challenges the highest degree of our assent, whether the thing proposed agree or disagree with common experience and the ordinary course of things." (Conduct of the Human Understanding, p. 384, ed. 1695.) See Leibnitz's Preliminary Discourse to his Theodicea, where he shows the conformity of faith with reason, and

* The manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, as understood by the Church of England, is equally an *incomprehensible mystery*, as Dr. Cosin acknowledges. "We confess," says he, "that this manner of presence is *unaccountable* and *past finding out*, not to be searched and pried into by *reason* but believed by *faith*. It is *incomprehensible, known only to God*," p. 34.

admits the possibility of the real presence in the Lutheran sense, which is certainly liable to the pretended absurdities and contradictions which are imputed to transubstantiation. With respect to this last article, the famous Descartes has formally declared, that it is perfectly consistent with sound philosophy; and the same is shown by Varignon, another celebrated natural philosopher, in an express dissertation which he wrote to prove, that a material being, however small, is capable of containing a human body. If the reader is not satisfied with these authorities, he may consult Lignac's work, entitled, The Possibility of a Corporeal presence in several places at the same time, or that of Caprinai, who shows that the same kind of arguments which demonstrate Christ's divinity against the Socinians, equally prove his real presence in the Eucharist against the Sacramentarians. Vel Christus est in Eucharistia, vel non est Deus, is the title of his dissertation. See likewise the Bishop of Boulogne's Pastoral Charge. But we need not recur to the authority of philosophers, or of divines. Considering that mankind know little or nothing concerning the nature and qualities of a glorified body, especially of the glorified body of Christ united in one person with the Divinity, it must argue the greatest presumption in any one, absolutely to deny the possibility of its existing in different places at the same time, or of its being contained in so small a space as that of the Host, or the smallest sensible particle of it. As to the question, How this can be? it is more becoming an infidel than a Christian, when we are speaking of a God to whom nothing is impossible, and who would not be God, if he could not do infinitely more than we can conceive. It is like the Jewish question, St. John vi. 52. How can this man give us his flesh to eat? As if the power of God were not as incomprehensible as himself, and as if it were not the height of folly to pretend to fathom its immense depth by human reason. The pretended contradictions, therefore, which are alleged against this mystery, deserve not the smallest consideration, when we have on our side the express words of Christ, the authority of the holy Fathers, and the unerring voice of the whole Catholic Church. To say that transubstantiation contains plain and evident contradictions, is to say that four parts in five of Christendom are absolute idiots. For a plain evident contradiction must certainly appear so to every man of common sense who considers it. Who, for instance, does not see at first sight a contradiction and absurdity in the assertion, that two and two make ten? And yet there have been thousands of philosophers and theologians, and are at this day thousands eminent for their good sense, learning, and piety, who cannot see the smallest contradiction in transubstantiation, but firmly believe it as a divine truth. Either then we must say, that all these are absolute idiots who cannot perceive a plain, evident contradiction; or we must conclude that these objected contradictions are not really plain and evident, but only represented as such by persons who are deeply prepossessed with their own notions and contrary systems. As to the trite argument against transubstantiation, taken from

the contradiction it has to our senses, which has been so magnified by Tillotson and others, let it be examined by the standard of reason, scripture, and tradition, and it will be found extremely weak, and totally undeserving of that stress which has been laid on it. For it supposes, that we must be universally guided by the impressions of sense; which however will be found repugnant to faith, to reason, and to experience. For then we must conclude, that he who appeared to Joshua and to the women in the monument, was a man, though the scripture says, he was an angel; that the sun and stars are not bigger than the earth; and that a straight stick, by being put into the water, is bent. On the other hand it is equally absurd to suppose that, because we cannot believe our senses in every thing, therefore we must believe them in nothing. For since God has given us senses to direct in some measure our judgment, we may and ought to rely on their information, unless either our senses themselves, or reason, or faith, correct their mistake. But if reason or experience may ever be allowed to over-rule their misinformation, as is often the case, we cannot surely refuse to pay the same deference to the revelation of God, when it tells us that such or such a thing is not what it appears to our senses. In short we have so many instances of this in the scripture, that, as it is ridiculous to to say, we must believe our senses in nothing, so it is impious to say, we must believe them in every thing. Let us hear how St. Chrysostom reasons on this subject. "Let us," says he, "always believe God and not contradict him, though what he says seems to contradict both our thought and our senses." For his words can not deceive us "but our senses may be easily deceived. He never errs, but these are often mistaken. Since therefore, he says, this is my body, let us be fully persuaded of it. How many say now, Oh that I could see him in his own shape! or his clothes, or anything about him. Believe me, you see him, you touch him, you eat him. You would be content to see his clothes, and he lets you not only see him, but also to touch him, and eat him, and receive him within you." (Hom. 83. in Matt.) From this quotation we clearly see what St. Chrysostom, that enlightened Doctor of antiquity, thought of the arguments drawn from a supposed contradiction of our senses and understanding, and of the real presence and transubstantiation.

3. The sacrifice of the Mass is also virtually included in that of the real presence; for the Mass consists in doing what Christ performed at his last supper, that is, in the consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and the offering up of the same body and blood to God by the ministry of the priest for a perpetual memorial of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, and a continuation of the same till the end of the world. Now, admitting the real presence of Jesus Christ upon our altar, under the Sacramental veils of bread and wine, we cannot doubt but that it is an offering highly acceptable to God in all respects, under which the fruits of our redemption are applied to mankind. For how can Jesus Christ be unacceptable to his Father? and how could

the fruits of his passion be applied more effectually than by himself? I know indeed that this doctrine of Christ's offering himself daily on the altar, is called by some Protestants "the directest contradiction that can be, not only to common sense, but also to scripture, which expressly says, that he was not to be offered often; for then must he often have suffered; but hath appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Secker's Lect. on the Catechism.) But it is obvious the Apostle speaks there of his offering himself in a bloody manner, by dying for the redemption of the world. This was to be but once, since he could but once pay the ransom which God demanded. But since he is our high priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec, he offers himself daily for us in an unbloody manner; not to redeem us again, but to apply by this, as by other means appointed by him, the price of our redemption. Moreover, since Protestants themselves do not think they offend Jesus Christ by offering him to God as present to their faith, what repugnance could they have to offer him up as truly present did they believe him to be so in reality? Hence, as Bossuet observes, this mighty dispute of the sacrifice of the mass, which has filled so many volumes, and occasioned so many invectives against Catholics, might justly be reduced to the real presence alone, of which it is a natural consequence, as he clearly shows in his Exposition of the Catholic Faith. We exhort therefore all sincere Protestants to weigh attentively the grounds on which the doctrine of the real presence is established, without being discouraged by the difficulties which sense and human reason may suggest to the contrary;—difficulties which ought to have less weight against the real presence, than those urged by Deists and Socinians against the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. For that there should be three persons in the God-head; that these should be really distinct, so that we can with truth affirm of the one what we cannot say of the others; and yet that all three should be but one and the self-same God, are mysteries infinitely superior to human reason, and which seem directly contrary to its principles. Again, that this divine, uncreated, self-existent nature should be so intimately united with the created, finite, and mortal nature of man, that both these opposite natures should exist in one and the same person; and that in consequence of this union, a God-Man should truly suffer and die, is so opposite to all the ideas of human reason, that it was a scandal to the Jews, and a stumbling block to the Gentiles, and is to this day a matter of ridicule to Free-thinkers and Deists. Now, since Protestants believe these truths, notwithstanding the apparent absurdities they seem to involve, and despise the absurdities urged against the positive revelation of these mysteries in the holy Scriptures, why should they not equally receive the doctrine of the real presence, in spite of its apparent difficulties, since it is more clearly taught, and expressly revealed in Scripture, than the Trinity and the Incarnation. Let us hear the testimony of Luther himself on this subject (Ep. ad Argent.) "I could wish,"

says he, "with all my heart, that any one could persuade me, that there is nothing in the Eucharist but bread and wine. I have taken a great deal of pains on this account, but all in vain; the text is too clear." Again, in speaking of the Sacramentarians who deny the real presence, he says: "the devil seems to have mocked mankind in proposing to them a heresy so ridiculous and contrary to Scripture as is that of the Zuinglians." (Op. Luth. Defens. Verb. Con.) It is the remark of Bossuet, "that God has permitted the Lutherans to adhere to the belief of the the real presence as well as we; and that he has also permitted the Calvinists should declare that this doctrine has no poison in it; that it does not subvert the foundations of salvation and faith; and that it ought not to break communion between brethren. Moreover, the same Providence has permitted the Calvanists to allow, that supposing these words, "this is my body," are to be taken in a literal sense, the Catholics reason better and more consequentially than the Lutherans." These concessions, on the part of adversaries, are highly favourable to the Catholic cause. The learned Grotius also candidly confesses, "that many disputers understand well enough the sense of the ancient church, and of the present Greek and Latin: but they dissemble it, that they may have matter for declamation among those who are guided more by their outward than their inward senses." See his Vote for Peace, p. 92.

As to the Church of England, it is certain that the name and sacrifice of the mass were introduced into this country together with Christianity itself, at the end of the sixth age. See Bede's Ecclesiastical History, l. 4. and 5. It is no less certain, that the belief of the real presence continued from that time to be received and professed by the kings, lords, and commons of this realm, till after the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is also well known, that in the articles of religion drawn up by King Henry the Eighth, who first constituted himself head of the English Church, it is expressly declared, that in the Eucharist, under the forms of bread and wine, the very flesh and blood of Christ are received; and in this doctrine the king ordered in his will, that his son Edward the Sixth should be educated. Moreover, the Church of England positively asserts in her catechism, that the body and blood of Christ "are verily and indeed taken and received" in the sacrament of the Lord's supper; are not these words, "verily and indeed," equally expressive of the real presence, with those used by the Council of Trent, viz. vere & realiter. It is to be observed, that these words, verily and indeed, must be understood of the body, as distinguished from its fruits and benefits, which make the subject of the next question: the Church also requires of her ministers to signify the same, in the very act of distributing it; "the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee; the blood, which was shed for thee," &c. Dr. Heylin, in his Introduction to the Life of Archbishop Laud, shows that these words which stood first in the Liturgy of Edward Sixth, were afterwards, when Zuinglianism obtained, expunged as approaching too near to

the Catholic doctrine, and then again restored to the present Liturgy in the time of Elizabeth. The reason of this we learn from Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, viz. because it was resolved upon, that the Articles and Liturgy should be so framed as to suit the consciences of Protestants who believed in the real presence, amongst whom was the Queen herself. For the same reason, the passage in the twenty-ninth Article of Edward Sixth, which declared that the body of Christ, being now in heaven, cannot be also in the sacrament, was suppressed in the corresponding twenty-eighth Article of Elizabeth. Accordingly, it appears from Mr. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity (l. 5.) that the belief of transubstantiation was one of the received opinions in his time, an opinion which he thought by no means reprehensible. The reader is referred to the Essay for Catholic Communion; where he will find the sentiments of many eminent Protestant Bishops on this important subject, viz. of Montague, Forbes, Bilson, Ridley, Laud, Kenn, &c. all of whom openly acknowledge the real presence with Catholics, though they disagree about the manner. The last mentioned prelate thus expresses himself in his Exposition of the Church Catechism, licensed an. 1685: "O God incarnate, how thou canst give us thy flesh to eat, and thy blood to drink; how thy flesh is meat indeed! how thou, who art in heaven, art present on the altar, I can by no means explain. But I firmly believe it all, because thou hast said it. And I firmly rely on thy love, and on thy omnipotence, to make good thy word, though the manner of doing it I cannot comprehend." In later editions, however, this passage has undergone alterations more conformable to the principles of Calvinists.

Let me here ask what ought to be the conclusion of a sincere, dispassionate Protestant, when he sees this obnoxious tenet of the Catholic Church; which by some warm, malevolent, or ignorant writers, is stigmatized as impious, unlawful, contrary to the word of God, and to the common sense and reason of all mankind, acknowledged to be true, lawful, and innocent by many others, eminent for their learning and moderation, no less than for their dignity and situation in the Church of England? But that an explicit declaration against this doctrine of transubstantiation should afterwards be deemed a necessary qualification for every Catholic, previous to his being admitted into any office, civil or military, must to every impartial man appear somewhat extraordinary, especially in a country which professes the most unlimited toleration in religious matters.—However hostile the present Church of England may avow herself to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, it is extremely difficult to know what she herself holds respecting this important question. This difficulty arises in part from the discordant and opposite sentiments which her ministers and prelates entertain among themselves with regard to this mystery. See Dr. Milner's Letters to a Prebendary, Letter 8th, wherein he shows that the Socinian scheme (as it is called by the present Bishop of Bangor,) has been adopted by Bishop Hoadly, Dr. Balguy, &c. To understand this, it must be

here observed, that in opposition to the established doctrine both of the Latin and Greek Church, as proved above, our modern reformers have devised three principal ways of expressing a presence of Christ in the holy sacrament. 1. That of the Lutherans, who maintain the presence of Christ in the sacrament, as real, proper, and substantial, as Catholics do; but deny an exclusion of bread. For bread, say they, remains as before, but to and with it the body of our Lord is united, and this, as it were, hypostatically. 2. That of the Zuinglians, Socinians, &c. who admit nothing real in the sacrament. The presence according to them, is only figurative or imaginary: as we see bread broken and eaten, &c. so we ought to call to mind that Christ's body was crucified for us; and that by faith (or a strong fancy) we are made partakers of the benefit of Christian redemption. The third opinion is that of Calvin, who says (on 1 Cor. xi. 24.) "that in the holy sacrament our Lord offers us not only the benefit of his death and resurrection, but the very body itself in which he died and rose again: so that this presence is supposed to be a substantial presence, but after a spiritual manner—a presence not to all, but to the worthy receiver, offered perhaps to the unworthy, but partaken of only by the worthy." From the statement of Dr. Cosin, in his history of transubstantiation, it would seem, that this opinion of Calvin coincides with the doctrine of the Church of England. See Hawarden's True Church of Christ, Part 3d, p. 144. In this well founded supposition, the doctrine of the Church of England contains a much greater mystery than transubstantiation itself; and not only a mystery, but an absolute impossibility. For what can be more evidently impossible, than that the body and blood of Christ should be only in heaven, and yet really and substantially present to the soul and body of the worthy receiver who is not in heaven? In this case, we may fairly say with Dryden,

> The literal sense is hard to flesh and blood:
> But nonsense never can be understood.

The opinion of Luther, however false, is perfectly intelligible; so is that of Zuinglius; but this of Calvin, adopted by English Protestants, is repugnant to common sense, and was probably intended to suit with any sect, according to circumstances. See Bossuet's Exposition of the Catholic doctrine, where he contrasts the Calvanistic system of the real presence with that of Catholics, and shows that they cannot, in their own principles, give a plain, consistent, and satisfactory account of their doctrine, but are unavoidably betrayed into contradictions and absurdities. While the language on both sides is nearly similar, the difference is, that Catholics mean what they say, and the Calvinists do not.

I shall conclude this article with a citation from Erasmus, an author justly celebrated for his elegant taste and extensive erudition, and who lived at a time when this important controversy was carried on with great warmth by the first reformers. In a letter dated an. 1530, and addressed to Balthasar, Bishop of Hildeshem, this eminent scholar avows his sentiments respecting the real presence, lamenting at the same time, that what Christ left us as the strictest bond of unity

and love, should, by the artifice of the devil, prove the occasion, of so much animosity and discord in the Christian world. He speaks with great eulogium of Guitmund and Alger, who, in the eleventh century, had both by argument and authority, solidly confuted the heresy of Berengarius, and declares, that his faith in this mystery, of which he never doubted, was much confirmed by reading their excellent works. We cannot suppose Erasmus unacquainted with the arguments and difficulties urged by the Sacramentarians; but in opposition to them, he adverts to the express words of Christ in the Gospel, "this is my body," and to the testimony of St. Paul, who hath the same words, with this declaration, that "whoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of Christ;"—he refers to the holy fathers, whose authority is justly admitted by the Church;—lastly, he refers to the uniform decision of councils, and to the general consent of the Christian world, which has ever believed, that in the Eucharist is contained the very substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. "Cum igitur," says he, "tam evidens habeamus a Christo et Paulo testimonium, cum per hos viros (Guitmundum et Algerem) evidentissime declaratum sit, priscos ecclesiæ doctores, quibus non sine causa tantum auctoritatis tribuit Ecclesia, concorditer sensisse in Eucharistia esse veram substantiam corporis et sanguinis Dominici; cum his omnibus accesserit synodorum constans authoritas, tantusque populi Christiani consensus, simus et nos concordes in tam cœlesti mysterio, et hic sub ænigmate edamus de pane et calice Domini, donec aliter edamus et libamus in regno Dei. Utinam autem, qui Berangariun secuti sunt errantem, sequantur et penitentem, atque horum etiam error Ecclesiæ cedat feliciter."—As to the solution of various questions which arise out of this mystery, as how transubstantiation is effected, how accidents can subsist without their subject, &c. he would have us reflect on the Almighty power of God, to whom nothing is impossible, and on the wonderful qualities of a glorified body, especially the glorified body of Christ. "Breviter adversus omnes humanæ cogitationis scrupulos occurrat nobis primum immensa Dei potentia, cui nihil impossibile, deinde quam inestimabiles sint dotes corporis glorificati, præcipue Domini Jesu. Superest igitur ut quod sufficientur persuasum est, dignè celebremus, et quod credimus, ipsa re nos credere declaremus, &c."—The intelligent reader may easily apply to other controversies the principles here recognized by Erasmus for deciding the question of the Eucharist, viz. Scripture and the authority and tradition of the Church.—For for further information on this subject, the reader is referred to the following work, printed an. 1800, entitled, "A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the Eucharist." See, also, my late Tract, on the Blessed Eucharist, published in 1829.

CHAPTER CXXXI.

JESUS POINTS OUT THE TRAITOR JUDAS, WHO WITHDRAWS HIMSELF.* MATT. XXVI. MARK XIV. LUKE XXII. JOHN XIII.

Previously to his changing the subject of his discourse, Jesus declared, that whoever received an Apostle, did, by so doing, receive himself, and moreover, that whoever received him, as they had recently done in the holy communion, received at the same time his heavenly Father that sent him. "Amen, amen I say to you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me," because my Father and I are one and the same thing.

He had hitherto spoken of the treason of Judas, in terms which were not perfectly understood by any present, except perhaps by Judas himself. He now resumes the subject with the view of making an impression on the mind of that hardened wretch, were he susceptible of remorse, in order that he might change his black design on finding himself discovered. Secondly, Jesus would remove from the minds of his other disciples all grounds of suspecting that he had been betrayed by Judas unawares, or that the fatal consequences following from that treason were involuntary and beyond his power to prevent. He therefore lays open the intended treason in clear and express terms, and at the same time points out, in secret only, the person of the concealed traitor.

"When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit," considering both the crime which Judas was about to commit, and the cruel death which himself was going to suffer. "And he testified" his grief when they were at table and eating; "and he said: behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. Amen, amen I say to you: one of you, that eateth with me, shall betray me. The disciples therefore looked one upon another, doubting of whom he spoke. And they being very much troubled, began every one to say: is it I, Lord? But he," unwilling to discover the traitor, "answering, said: one of the twelve, that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me." This circumstance being common to all present, pointed at no one in particular: to this he further added the reason of his declining to name him aloud, which was the obedience he owed to the commands of his heavenly Father, in compliance with which he chose to submit patiently to every humiliating and painful circumstance of his approaching passion, and thus literally to fulfil all things which had been written of him. "The Son of Man indeed," said he, "goeth"

* St. Matthew and St. Mark place Christ's prediction of the treason of Judas *before*, St. Luke and St. John *after*, the institution of the blessed Eucharist. We have followed the last Evangelists, though it be highly probable that Jesus foretold this treachery of his Apostle three different times, as Thoynard, Sandinus, and Ben. xiv. observe, 1. At the beginning of supper, as mentioned Matt. xxvi. 21 Mark xiv. 18. 2. After washing the feet of his disciples, John xiii. 18. 3. After he had instituted the holy Eucharist, Luke xxii. 21.

to death, "as it is written of him; but wo to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born.* And Judas that betrayed him," fearful of discovering himself by remaining any longer silent, "answering, said" as the rest: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him," but in so low a tone of voice as not to be heard by any person present, "Thou hast said it."

The disciples finding that they did not succeed in extorting a satisfactory answer from Jesus, "began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing." Especially Peter, we may imagine, would interrogate the rest, perhaps with some degree of asperity, under the hopes of discovering the culprit by causing him to contradict himself in his answers. In this, however, they were yet unsuccessful, and they entertained the less suspicion of Judas, on account of the confidence which Jesus reposed in him; for he had intrusted him with the custody of such alms as were bestowed upon them. Hence it is probable that Judas enjoyed the reputation of a person of tried fidelity.

At length Peter, extremely impatient to discover the secret, took advantage of the situation which he and John enjoyed at the table. Now there was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" on account of his eminent chasity. "Simon Peter therefore, beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom he speaketh? When therefore he leaned down upon the breast of Jesus,* he saith to him: Lord who is it? Jesus answered," in a low voice, but with an injunction not to publish it: "It is he to whom I shall reach bread dipped.† And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." This mark of distinction tended to remove still further any suspicions which the apostles might otherwise have entertained to the disadvantage of Judas. Thus Peter, greatly to his disappointment, receiving no answer from John, continued as much in the dark as before. "And after" Judas had taken "the morsel, Satan entered into him," and taking fuller possession of his heart, urged him on to the execution of his horrid design. "And Jesus seeing him resolutely determined upon it, "said to him" in a mild manner: "That which thou dost, do quickly."‡ This was by no means an injunction to commit the crime already conceived in his heart, but merely an intimation of his readiness to suffer death. "Now no man at the table knew to what purpose he said this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him: Buy those things which we have need of for the festival day, or that he should give something to the poor.§

* Christ had admitted Judas to his table, and washed his feet, he had declared that one of his disciples would betray him, he here threatens him with eternal damnation; but all this is ineffectual, and makes no impression in Judas, on account of the hardness of his heart. In like manner God often gives sinners warning; but on account of their hard and impenitent heart, he finally abandons them to themselves.

* In the Greek it is *falling down on the breast of Jesus*, as a person may do in great concern or trouble of mind. Hence the term here employed, *epipeson* is different from that inver. 23. *anakeimenos*.

† This was not the holy eucharist, which Jesus had already distributed to all the apostles, and consequently to Judas.

‡ Vox hæc non jubentis est sed sinentis, non trepidi sed parati, says St. Leo, Ser. 7, de Passione.

§ Let Christians here learn that a feast is a proper time to express their care for the poor.

He therefore, having received the morsel, went out immediately" full of indignation; "and it was night," perhaps about nine o'clock. "When he therefore was gone out, Jesus" seeing, that by this first step of Judas, his passion and death were at hand, and that they were soon to be followed by a glorious resurrection, "said: now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him," by his doctrine, his miracles, his humiliations and sufferings, "God will also glorify him in himself," by his triumph over sin and the devil, according to the promise made to him in the temple by the voice from above: "and immediately will he glorify him," first, by his resurrection, and afterwards by exalting him to eternal happiness in heaven. —Let Christians learn from the example of Christ, that if they would be glorified with him in heaven, they must first glorify God here on earth, by humility, by patience, and the practice of good works.

CHAPTER CXXXII.

THE SECOND ALTERCATION OF THE APOSTLES CONCERNING PRIMACY—PETER'S DENIAL IS FORETOLD.* LUKE XXII. JOHN XIII. MATT. XXVI. MARK XIV.

As Christ had just signified that he was soon to quit the world, and to be glorified in the kingdom of his Father, the Apostles took occasion to renew their former altercation concerning the primacy. "And there was a strife amongst them which of them seemed to be greatest." Jesus endeavoured to restore peace and unanimity amongst them, 1. By explaining the nature of the employments and dignities of his spiritual kingdom in this world; 2. By promising them so perfect an equality both of honour and of happiness in heaven, as would not fail to satisfy their most sanguine wishes. "And he said to them," as he had done on a former occasion: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that have power over them are called benefactors," and are looked up to as such by others, when at the same time they feel the weight of their authority. "Let it not be so with you: but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the least, and he that is the chief, as he that serveth." Of this conduct Jesus holds forth his own personal example as an instance: "For which," says he "is greater, he that sitteth at table or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," and ministereth to all your wants, and so must you be content to serve one another. He next speaks with due praise of their steadfastness in his service; and in lieu of temporal dignities, promises them an ample reward hereafter. "And you," said he, "are they who have continued with me in my temptations" and troubles; and in recom-

* See the first, chap. 78.

pense of your fidelity "I dispose to you as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," that is, the spiritual Israel, or the whole Church of God. Hence he left them to infer, that their present altercation concerning superiority was needless, and their mutual jealousy of each other ill-founded. Yet, lest they should be puffed up with this acknowledgment of their fidelity, Jesus humbled them by stating two exceptions, the first of which concerned them all as a body, the second regarded Peter individually. "Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written:* I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." Their fault in this instance was not so much in flying away, as in the principle or motive which induced them to do so, and which consisted in an excessive attachment to this life, and in a want of that faith and hope which they had placed in him. He however added, as a subject of consolation, that he would not fail to gather them together. "But after I shall be risen again," said he, "I will go before you into Galilee."

The idea of being classed with the other Apostles under the same description of cowardice and weakness gave offence to Peter, and he became eager to show his Master how little this was applicable to him individually. "And answering, he said to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized.

* Zach. xiii. 7.

And the Lord," repressing this blamable self-confidence, said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," that is, may toss you about with troubles to shake your faith. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Then leaving Peter to guess at the meaning of these words, which as yet he understood not perfectly, Jesus addressed himself to the others in the most affectionate terms, offering them some consolation under the disgrace which he had just foretold to them. "My little children," said he, "yet awhile I am with you. You shall seek me, and as I said to the Jews, whither I go you cannot come: so I say it also to you" in your present weak and timid state of mind. What I chiefly recommend to you, is a spirit of mutual charity. Yes, "a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you;" that is, with a spiritual love and affection, even so as after my example to prefer the salvation of your brethren before your own life. Wherefore see "that you also love one another" in like manner. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. Peter," feeling yet rather hurt at the doubt which Jesus seemed to have of his fidelity and attachment, "saith to him: Lord, whither goest thou?" for he wished to have a further explanation as to what he had asserted of their not being able to accompany him. "Jesus answered" as before: "whither I go, thou canst not follow me

now, but thou shalt hereafter. Peter," full of sentiments of love and attachment towards Jesus, but not yet sensible of his own weakness, nor conscious how much more deeply the love of life was rooted in his heart, "saith to him" resolutely: "Why cannot I follow thee now? Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death: I will lay down my life for thee. Jesus answered him: wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Amen, amen, I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me." Yes, I say, "to-day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." But notwithstanding this explicit declaration of his approaching weakness, Peter became not more diffident of himself: he even "spoke the more vehemently: Yea, though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said all the disciples," resolving not to be behindhand with Peter in their professions of courage and fidelity. Yet when the hour of trial came, they proved equally weak, and were no less intimidated than Peter. What a striking picture of human weakness. Jesus now proceeded to inform them of those dangers to which, by following him, they were exposed. He first recalled to their recollection the time when he sent them as missionaries destitute of every necessary of life: "And he said to them: When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want any thing? But they said, nothing;" because on that occasion such as were well disposed towards Jesus had joyfully received them into their houses, and abundantly supplied them with every necessary assistance. But he now assured them, that in this second separation from him, which was drawing nigh, the state of things would, in their regard, be very different. "Then he said unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword.* For I say to you, that this, that is written, must yet be fulfilled in me, "and with the wicked was he reckoned.† For the things concerning me have an end." He then forewarns them, that as himself should shortly be condemned to die as a thief or a robber, so in like manner they, as his followers, must expect to meet with a similar treatment. In fact, the Pharisees had given orders that the eleven Apostles should be seized together with Jesus, hoping thus at once to annihilate what they styled a new sect, in its very origin, and as it were in its very cradle. "But" the Apostles "said: Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said to them: it is enough" to explain my meaning, thereby intimating that he did not speak in a literal sense, for if it were necessary to fight, not twelve swords would have been sufficient.

* These are figurative expressions, such as the prophets frequently made use of, and they only signify, in a lively manner, the great danger and persecution to which the apostles were going to be exposed. This danger was so great, that if they were to consult their personal safety by human precautions, they should provide themselves with a scrip, a purse, and a sword, to defend their lives. However, from the sequel, it is clear, that Peter understood him in a literal sense, and accordingly armed himself with a sword, fully determined to resist any violence which might be offered to his Master's person.

† Isaiah liii. 12.

CHAPTER CXXXIII.

CHRIST'S DISCOURSE AFTER THE LAST SUPPER. HE COMFORTS HIS APOSTLES. PROFESSES HIMSELF THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. REQUIRES LOVE AND OBEDIENCE. PROMISES THE HOLY GHOST THE COMFORTER.

THE three following chapters contain the incomparable discourse which Jesus had with his Apostles after his last supper. They were under no small agitation of mind upon several accounts, and were particularly hurt by Christ's declaring the impossibility of their following him. This declaration comprised all, not excepting even Peter, the most fearless and intrepid among them. They were apprehensive of losing him entirely, and with him all the fruits of their past labours, and their most flattering hopes. Christ, therefore, begins by dissipating their groundless fears, and rectifying their misconception of things; and as this originated in their being accustomed to view him in no other light than as a common man, he exhorts them to believe in him with a faith equally strong with that by which they believe in God himself, and thus to fix the eyes of their soul upon his divine nature and the unchangeable certainty of his promises. This he offers to them as the only remedy or safe-guard against their desponding thoughts in the present trying moment. "Let not your heart be troubled," says he; "you believe in God," and put your trust in him, "believe also" and trust "in me, his only and co-equal Son," and be assured of the effect of my promises in your favor. "In my Father's house there are many mansions,"* sufficient for you all. "If not I would have told you," that you need not expect a place in my kingdom: but be assured that you shall dwell there with me, "because I go to prepare you a place. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again" in due time, "and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be," and may receive with me the reward of eternal happiness in my kingdom. "And whither I go, you know, and the way you know. Thomas saith to him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" They knew it, says St. Austin,† but they did not know that they knew it. They knew their Master Jesus Christ, and he was the way: they also knew, that is, believed the kingdom of heaven, but they knew not that he was returning thither; for as yet their imaginations were fixed on a temporal kingdom. "Jesus saith to him: I am the way" by my doctrine and example, "and the truth" by my promises, "and the life" by the graces I offer and give. Wherefore, "no one cometh to the Father, but by me," by believing in my doctrine, by following my example, and by applying to him-

* These mansions are suitable to the degrees of piety which Christians shall arrive at in this world. Let us therefore endeavor to be eminent in grace, that we may be eminent in glory.

† Tract. 69.

self the merits of my passion and death. "If you had known me" more perfectly, "you would doubtless have known my Father also," he being one with me: "and from henceforth," after the coming of the Holy Ghost, "you shall know him" with a more perfect knowledge; "and you have seen him" by the faith which you have had in me. "Philip saith to him," with a holy eagerness: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. Jesus saith to him: so long a time have I been with you," teaching you who I am both by my words and actions, "and have you not known me?" If you beheld me and my divine nature with the eyes of faith, in seeing me you would see the Father also. Yes, "Philip, he that seeth me, seeth also the Father:" that is, whoever sees or knows that Jesus is the Son of God, knows with equal certainty that God is the Father of Jesus, all correlatives being inseparable in their nature, and in the idea we form of them: so that he who sees or knows by faith who Jesus is, cannot but know that Jesus is one with his eternal Father; not one person, as the Sabellians fancied, but one in nature and substance. The ancient Fathers take notice against the Arians, that these words and others that follow in this chapter, could not be true if Christ were no more than a creature, though ever so perfect; there being an infinite distance betwixt God and the highest of his creatures. Wherefore Christ thus expresses his astonishment at Philip's request: "How sayest thou, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" since we have the same essence, the same wisdom, and the same power. Hence "the words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself," and what I do, I do it not of myself. "But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works. Do you not believe that I am" thus "in the Father, and the Father in me?" If you believe it not on account of my words, "believe at least on account of the works themselves," which so clearly prove it: "Amen, amen, I say to you: he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do: because I go to the Father, and whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Christ speaks of the greatness of visible miracles, and tells his Apostles, that after his ascension they shall be enabled even to do greater miracles than those which he has yet shown to the world. This power he communicated to his disciples, in order that they might be enabled to convert the world; and perhaps the greatest of all miracles was the very conversion of an idolatrous world. And to show that his power was the same with that of his Father, he adds: "If you shall ask me" also "any thing in my name, that will I do." As a further subject of consolation, Christ assures his Apostles, that if they loved him, and showed this love by keeping his commandments, he would send them another comforter besides himself, viz. the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Ghost. "If you love me," says he, "keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will send you an

other Paraclete,* that he may abide with you for ever."† and this comforter shall be "the Spirit of Truth, whom the world," being carnal and earthly-minded, "cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him: but you shall know him, because he shall abide with you," not in a corporeal visible manner, as I have done, but he "shall be in you" in a manner altogether spiritual and divine, as the spirit of your spirit, and as the soul of your soul. Likewise, "I" myself "will not leave you orphans: I will come to you" again after my resurrection. "Yet awhile, and the world seeth me no more, but you shall see me, because I live" after my death, "and you shall live" with me. "In that day, when I am risen again, you shall know, that I am in my Father" by the unity of one and the same nature, "and that you" are "in me" as members of my body, "and I in you" as the head united to its members, and sanctifying you with my holy Spirit. But to obtain this knowledge, and in gratitude for so great a blessing, you must love me, and give proof of your love by obeying my injunctions. For "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas (not he called Iscariot) saith to him, Lord, what is the reason that thou art about to manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?" For this apostle imagined that the Messiah would manifest his glory as a temporal king, not to them only, but to all the world. But Christ informs him, that he spoke only of a manifestation of his love to those that loved him, and therefore that the world was unqualified for such a divine manifestation, being seated in wickedness, and an enemy to what fits souls for a fellowship with heaven. Wherefore, as those only who truly love him are to be honored with his familiar converse, and admitted to intimate communications of grace and favor, it was easy to assign a reason for the distinction which he made between them and the world, viz. their love for him on the one side, and the world's hatred and indifference on the other. Hence "Jesus answered" Judas, "and said to him: If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him" with a fresh increase of graces and blessings, "and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words: and the word that you have heard, is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will suggest all things to you, whatsoever I shall have said to you," in order that you may be able to understand and practise them. In the mean time I bequeath you my peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give it to you." The peace of the world is ever false and deceitful like itself; my peace is true

* The word Paraclete signifies both an advocate and a comforter.

† What greater comfort, what greater security for the faithful, than to have this divine promise, that the Holy Ghost will remain with the pastors of the Church for ever, to protect and preserve them against all heresies and errors?

and permanent: I do not give it, in the usual manner of the world, by empty, unmeaning speeches and wishes, but by solid and efficacious wishes; lastly, my peace is not such as the world usually wishes to its followers, viz. the enjoyment of health, a long life, the gratification of sensual pleasures; but, on the contrary, it consists in the spiritual blessings of grace here, and eternal enjoyment of glory hereafter.

The apostles seem to have been most sensibly affected with this last farewell, even to the shedding of tears, and thereupon Jesus exhorted them by no means to give way to immoderate grief: "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid," says he, "you have heard that I said to you; I go and I come to you again. In case you loved me" truly, instead of being afflicted as you are "you would doubtless be glad that I go to the Father, because the Father is greater than I" as man, and will make my humanity partaker of that glory which belongs to me as God. "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall have come to pass, you may believe," and that seeing me ascend up into heaven, you may be assured that I go to take possession of that glory which belongs to me as the Son of God. "Now I will not speak many things with you. For the prince of this world," that is, the devil, "cometh" to exercise all his fury against me, "and" yet "in me he hath not any thing" that belongs to him. "But" I abandon myself to his rage, "that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father hath commanded me," though at the expense of my honor and life. "Arise, let us go hence," and wait courageously the arrival of our enemies. "And when they had said an hymn,* they went forth towards the mount of Olives."

CHAPTER CXXXIV.

CONTINUATION OF OUR SAVIOUR'S DISCOURSE AFTER HIS LAST SUPPER.† JOHN XV. 1 TO 27; XVI. 1 TO 5

After having thus comforted his disciples, and armed them against any immoderate sorrow on account of his death, Jesus now proceeds to caution them against other evils of more dangerous consequence, viz. an inconstancy in faith, a coldness in charity, and a want of patience and longanimity under persecution. He exhorts them to keep themselves, even during his absence, closely united to him, by means of faith and of love. Hence he compares himself to a vine, his Father to a husbandman, or dresser of vines, and his disciples to the branches of this vine. He styles himself the true

* The hymn, here alluded to, may signify no more than an act of thanksgiving which was sung by Christ and his apostles. Some will have it to have been Hallel, which was composed of six eucharistical psalms, beginning about the 112th Psalm, Laudate Pueri Dominum, and concluding with the 117th: for the Jews were accustomed to sing these in thanksgiving at the conclusion of their feasts. Alcuin is of opinion, that this hymn is no other than what is contained in the 17th chapter of St. John. See his letter on this subject addressed to Charles the Great, who had expressed his surprise at the Evangelists having omitted this hymn. The word "ymnesantes" implies that it was sung.

† Calmet is of opinion, that Christ continued these discourses in his way to Gethsemani, which is highly probable; so that what is said in chap. cxxxvii. note 1, "When Jesus had said these things, he went out," etc., must be understood of his going out of the town, or of passing over the torrent

vine, because he more fully influences the faithful, who are the members of his body, than the vine influences and nourishes its branches. With regard to the vine, it is requisite that the branch should remain united with the stock; likewise, that it be not barren, but produce fruit; and lastly, that it produce fruit plentifully. Thus it ought to be with regard to Christians, who adhere to Christ through faith. Those branches which are united to him, and yet produce not the fruit of good works, will infallibly be cut off from the stock by the Father, as useless wood. This separation is sometimes effected by heresy and schism, into which God permits these useless Christians to fall, and sometimes by the stroke of death which he inflicts upon them. Those branches which already bear fruit, the Father will prune; and by lopping off all superfluous wood, will render them still more fruitful. This pruning is performed by secret inspirations, by sicknesses, and other afflictions; and sometimes by the sharp knife of persecutions, which serve to purify well-meaning souls from the empty amusements of this world.

"I am the true vine," says Jesus Christ, those that believe in me are the branches, "and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Applying this comparison to his disciples, Jesus acknowledges them to be already dressed and pruned branches, inasmuch as their minds were disengaged from worldly superfluities. It remained that they should bear fruit in great plenty, and to effect this it was necessary that they should abide immovably in him, and he in them. To this union he urgently exhorts them, by describing the great advantages which would thence accrue to them. "Now you are clean," says he, and like to pruned branches, "by reason of the word which I have spoken to you," and which you have received. It only remains to bring forth fruit in greater abundance. For this purpose "abide in me and I in you." For "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in me" by faith, "and I in him" by grace, "the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing" meritorious of a reward in heaven. And therefore it is of the utmost importance that you remain invariably attached to me. "If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as an" useless "branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire" of hell, "and" there "he shall burn" eternally without being consumed. And, on the contrary, "if you abide in me" by a lively faith, "and my words abide in you" by an ardent charity, which may make you fruitful in all good works, "you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you," provided it be for the greater glory of God. For as the vine-dresser glories in the abundance which his vine produces, so "in this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit, and become my" true "disciples," by following my doctrine and imitating the holiness of my life.

Jesus now proceeds to caution his followers against allowing their charity to grow cold, during his absence, either in regard to himself or their neighbour. With regard to himself, he says that their love towards him ought to be constant, like that love which he entertained for them, and which was copied from that love which his Father had borne towards him his Son. "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide in my love," as I abide in the love of my Father. "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and do abide in his love. These things have I spoken to you, that" you may practise them, and that thus "my joy may be in you" as my true followers, "and" that "your joy" in me "may be filled," and may go on increasing to the end. With regard to your neighbour, "this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Now, "greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," which is what I am about to do for you. "You are," therefore, truly "my friends, if you do the things that I command you," and if you love your brethren so as to be willing to give your life for them. "I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father* I have made known to you," by laying open to you his designs in my regard, and the graces which he purposes to impart to you. Yet, lest this glorious title of being his intimate *friends*, should become a subject of vain-glory, our Saviour reminds his disciples, that it is not they themselves who have first chosen to attach themselves to him, but that it is he himself who has distinguished them by his own free choice. "You have not chosen me," says he: "but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go" and declare the will of God to the world; "and should bring forth" much and lasting "fruit" in the conversion of souls, "and that your fruit should remain" even to the end, by the constant profession and practice of true virtue and religion. In the performance of this work, labor assiduously, so as to merit "that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you" again, "that you love one another" with a sincere, mutual affection, so as to be willing even to die for each other, as I am going to do for you."

Jesus, in the next place, cautions his apostles against all excessive dread of persecution; which he does by holding out to them his own example of suffering and fortitude. "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you. The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they

* We can only understand these words, as St. Chrysostom takes notice, of all things which they were capable of understanding, or which it was proper to communicate to them; for Christ tells them in the next chapter, v. 12, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But," what ought to comfort you under all your sufferings, is the justice of your cause, and the injustice of your persecutors, for "all these things they will do to you," not on account of any misdemeanor, but "for my name's sake," and in hatred of my person, "because they know not him that sent me." But this their ignorance does not excuse them. It is true, that "if I had not come, and spoken to them" plainly concerning my divinity, "they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin," and their incredulity can only be the effect of wilful blindness and prepossession against me. Now "he that hateth me, hateth my Father also," who is God. Moreover, "if I had not done amongst them the" miraculous "works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin" in disbelieving and rejecting me: "but now they have both seen" the miracles which I have done in their favor, "and" yet "they have hated both me and my Father," which shows their obstinate and habitual wickedness. But this hath so happened, "that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: *They have hated me without a cause.*"*

He further strengthens them against the dread of persecution, by promising to send them the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, who would oppose the weight of his testimony to the calumnies of the Jews, and show, by various ways, that Jesus was the Son of God and the promised Messiah, by the voice of his numerous disciples, by the many miracles which they would work in his name, and by the conversion of great numbers of his declared enemies, who would avow their conviction, and embrace his holy religion. "But when the Pareclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he shall give testimony of me," and with wonderful efficacy shall cause my doctrine to be acknowledged throughout the world. "And you" also, though now so weak and fearful, "shall give testimony" of me and of my divinity, because you are with me "from the beginning" of my preaching, and have witnessed, both in my words and actions, a wisdom and power truly divine.

Having armed his apostles with zeal and courage by these powerful motives, Jesus now at length foretells to them more in particular the persecutions which they would have to undergo; lest by coming upon them unexpectedly they might occasion in their minds the greater trouble and anxiety.

"These things have I spoken to you," says he, "that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: moreover the hour cometh," when their blindness will be so great, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God.* And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them," and may thus find, even

* Ps. xxiv. 19.

* Hence it is evident, that a man may sin very grievously, though he follow the dictates of his conscience when erroneous. The Jews did so, and St. Paul likewise.

in your sufferings themselves, the source of your patience and consolation, by reflecting that you suffer for a God who knows them, who foretold them to you, and who will hereafter abundantly recompense all your crosses. "But I told not these things from the beginning, because I was with you;" and as they were to come to pass only after my decease, it would have occasioned you unnecessary trouble and sorrow before the time.

CHAPTER CXXXV.

A SECOND CONTINUATION OF CHRIST'S DISCOURSE. JOHN XVI. 5 TO 33.

JESUS being about to return to his Father, in order to soften the affliction which this intelligence would naturally convey to his apostles, represents his departure under the figure of an ordinary journey, and expresses his surprise, that they did not, as is usual among intimate friends, more particularly inquire into the motive of his journey, the nature of his employment when with his Father, and the benefits which would thence accrue to him. He gently rebukes them, that instead of evincing so laudable a curiosity, they allow themselves to be overwhelmed with grief at the first communication of his departure. "And now," says he, "I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things, sorrow hath filled your heart." We cannot sufficiently admire the sweet and humane conduct of our Saviour, in thus endeavoring to soothe the affliction of his disciples, while he himself was actually on the way to suffer a cruel and ignominious death.

He then adverts to the reasons which rendered his departure necessary. "But I tell you the truth," says he, "it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment.* Of sin," which the Jews and all obstinate unbelievers commit; "because they have not believed in me," after so many miracles, and so many pressing motives, that ought to induce them to submit to the Christian faith: "and of" the "justice" of my cause and of my innocence, a certain proof of which will be, "because I go to the Father," and ascend to eternal glory, "and you shall see me no longer" upon earth, being seated at his right hand in heaven: "and of" the "judgment" or condemnation of the world; "because the prince of this world is already judged," is stripped of his usurped empire over mankind, and condemned to eternal flames; and therefore all those that are enslaved to him by sin, can expect no other treatment than to be involved in the same damnation. These considerations, so glorious for Jesus, should not only have induced his disciples to consent

* *Of sin:* of the general corruption of human nature in Adam. *Of justice:* of the reparation of our nature in Christ by his grace. *Of judgment:* of the just condemnation of sin and sinners.

to his departure, but even to have hastened, if possible, an event which tended so much to the advancement of his glory.

With regard to the apostles themselves, their state of weakness and ignorance prevented him from imparting to them at present many other things which they would know afterwards, when he should send down his holy Spirit upon them. "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come," he will fortify you against the severest trials, "and will teach you" and the Church "all truth: for he shall not speak from himself" only, because he is not from himself, but proceedeth from the Father and the Son; "but what things soever he shall hear"* from the Father and the Son, "he shall speak, and the things that are come, he shall show you," so as to make you perfectly understand my gospel in the spiritual design of it. He shall glorify me" by publishing it throughout the world, "because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine.† Therefore I said, that he shall receive of mine and show it to you."

Jesus once more bids them farewell, informing them that shortly they shall lose sight of him, but that soon afterwards they shall again see him risen from the dead, "A little while," says he, "and now you shall not see me: and again a little while and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said," in a low voice, "one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith: A little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus," without having heard them, "knew that they had a mind to ask him, and he said to them: Of this do ye inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me; and again, a little while, and you shall see me?* Amen, Amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, and the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in labor hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." The pains of child-bearing, however acute, are transient, and are followed by a lasting joy. "So also" it shall be

* His hearing, says St. Austin, is his knowledge, and his knowledge is his essence or being, which from eternity is from the Father and the Son. The like expressions are applied to the Son, as proceeding from the Father: John v. 30, and viii. 16, etc. Observe, that the Holy Ghost is here spoken of as a person distinct from the Father and the Son: and the Son as distinct from the Father and Holy Ghost, in the following verses.

† The obvious sense of these words, shows that the Son hath the same nature and the same substance as the Father, and that he is one and the same God with him. And by Christ's adding: "Therefore he," the Holy Ghost, "shall receive of mine," we are taught that the third person proceeds both from the Father and the Son, and that he receives and has the same perfections; so that here are plainly distinguished the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity.

* St. Austin says, Trac. 101, that by the first *little while:* may be understood also the short time till Christ's ascension, and by the latter *little while* the short time that the apostles were to live in this world; after which they should see and enjoy Christ for ever in the kingdom of heaven; and this exposition seems to agree better with the following promise: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy," chiefly at the end of your mortal life then shall you have joy never to be taken from you.

in your regard; "you now indeed have sorrow," because the hour is come when I am to be separated from you by death. "But I will see you again," after my resurrection, "and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you.* And in that day you shall not" need to "ask me any thing;" but you shall perfectly understand by the event, the meaning of this *little while* which now seems so involved in mystery. "Amen, Amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it to you.† Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name," by the merits of me your Mediator and Redeemer:‡ "ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be complete," by the present satisfaction you will have in receiving the effect of your prayers, and by the hope you will conceive of obtaining one day the accomplishment of all your desires. "These things I have spoken to you in proverbs; the hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will speak to you openly concerning the Father.§ In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you, that I," though your Redeemer and Advocate, "will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." In effect, "I came forth from the Father," as begotten of him from all eternity, and am come into the world" in order to redeem it from sin and hell: "and," as man, "I go to the Father," with whom I am, and have always been as God. "His disciples say to him: Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and usest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things," being more and more confirmed that thou art the Messiah, the true Son of God, "and thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God.* Jesus answered them: Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is at hand; and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his home, and leave me alone: and" yet "I am not alone, because the Father is with me," and will not abandon me. "These things I have spoken to you," not by way of reproaching you for your future infidelity, but "that in me you may have peace,"† protection, and comfort, amidst the evils that await you: for "in the world you shall meet with distress; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world," and by my victory over it, have merited for you the graces necessary that you likewise may overcome it yourselves, and may thus obtain an eternal crown of glory.

* Whereas the sinner has no joy, but what may soon be taken from him.

† Whatever graces and assistances you stand in need of, ask them in my name, as I am your chief Mediator, through whose merits all shall be granted you. This is the constant practice of the Catholic Church, to ask for all graces through our Lord Jesus Christ.

‡ They were not yet, says St. Cyril, acquainted with this manner of praying and petitioning, as they became afterwards.

§ This he did during the forty days which intervened betwixt his resurrection and his ascension.

* Yet St. Chrysostom, St. Cyril, and St. Augustine take notice that their faith was but imperfect till after Christ's resurrection and the coming of the Holy Ghost, and therefore Christ answered them: "Do you now believe? The hour is coming," etc.

† The peace which Christ leaves with his servants does not consist in being free from afflictions, but in enabling us to overcome them, to rejoice in them, etc.

CHAPTER CXXXVI.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST BEFORE HIS PASSION. JOHN XVII. 1 TO 26.

"THESE things Jesus spoke, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said" the following prayer, which is divided into three parts. In the first, he prays for himself; in the second, for his apostles; in the third, for all the elect. He spoke it aloud for the instruction of his apostles, and the beloved disciple has recorded it for the instruction, comfort, and consolation of the whole Church. "Father, the hour" of my death "is come, glorify thy Son" by raising him again to life, 'that thy Son may" reciprocally "glorify thee," by making thee known and adored throughout the earth. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh,* that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him," so exalt him to that state in which he may exercise that power, by bringing many to the faith, and by fitting them for eternal life. "Now this is" the way to "eternal life, that they know thee the only true God," in opposition to those false gods they now ignorantly worship, "and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent into the world"* as the Saviour of mankind. "I have glorified thee upon the earth," by my preaching and miracles: "I have accomplished the" great "work" of man's sanctification, "which thou gavest me to do: and now, O Father, glorify me with thyself," by exalting my human nature to thy right hand, and by crowning me "with that glory which," as to my divine nature, "I had with thee, before the world was."

Jesus having thus prayed for himself as man, next intercedes for his apostles, as the faithful ministers of his word "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me," and have separated them from "out of the world. Thine they were" by creation, "and thou gavest them to me" for my disciples, "and they have kept thy word," which I announced to them as coming from thee. "Now they have known, that all things which thou hast given me," and authorized me to say and do, "are from thee. For the words which thou gavest me, I have

* He speaks of himself as made man and the Redeemer of mankind: if we ask, who are they who in this sense are said *to be given* to Christ? the answer is that only the elect or predestinate are given to him by a special and uncommon mercy. In this sense, St. Austin says, Trac. 111, "They are not said to be given, to whom he shall not give life everlasting." Yet not only the elect, but all believers, nay all men whatever may be said to be given to him, inasmuch as by his coming to redeem all, sufficient helps and means are offered to all men, by which they may be saved, and inasmuch as Christ came, suffered, died, and offered up his death for all men. See 2 Cor. v. 15, etc.

* The Arians pretended from these words, that the Father only is the true God. St. Austin and others answer, that the sense and construction is: *That they may know thee, and also Jesus Christ thy Son whom thou hast sent to be the only true God.* We may also observe with St. Chrysostom and others, that the Father is here called the *only true God*, not to exclude the Son and the Holy Ghost, who are the same one true God with the Father, but only to exclude the false gods of the Gentiles. Let the Socinians take notice, that in the first epistle of John, chap. v. ver. 20, as well as in other places, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is expressly called *the true God*, even with the Greek article, upon which Socinians commonly lay so great a stress.

given" and declared "to them; and they have received them" as thine with the greatest docility; "and have known for certain, that I came forth from thee," as thy only and eternal begotten Son, "and they have believed that thou didst send me" into the world as the promised Messiah whom they expected. "I pray," therefore, "for them" efficaciously: "I pray not," in this address, "for" the wicked and reprobate part of "the world,"* whose principle is a love of pleasure, "but for them whom thou hast given me" as my disciples, who are dear to me, because they are thine. And all my things are thine, and thine are mine:"† hence those whom thou hast given me are both thine and mine, which engages me doubly to pray for them. "And" moreover as "I am glorified in them' by their faith in me, and by the ready obedience which they have paid to my words, so this is an additional motive for interesting myself in their preservation. "And now I am not in the world to watch over them in a visible manner, "but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep" and protect "them" during my absence, "in thy name, whom thou hast given me," and who always belong to thee: preserve them in the union of faith and of charity, "that they may be one,‡ in mind and heart, "as we also are one in nature and substance. "While I was with them in the world, "I kept them in thy name. Those whom thou gavest me, have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, the perfidious Judas, by his own fault, "that the scripture may be fulfilled.* And now I come to thee: and these things I speak in the world in the presence of my disciples, "that they may have my joy filled in themselves, by their firm hope of being partakers of the same happiness with myself. "I have given them thy word," which they received with faith and with courage: and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world." However, "I pray not that thou take them away out of the world, but that thou preserve them from evil," so as to come off victorious over all the temptations and persecutions which the devil and the world shall raise against them. "They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world;" and hence they are better disposed to receive the impressions of thy grace and sanctity. "Sanctify them," therefore, "in truth," communicate to them a true sanctity, in order to fit them for the sublime employ of announcing "thy word," which "is truth" itself. For "as thou hast sent me into the world" to announce thy truth to men, "so I also have sent

* Christ here prays for special graces and assistances to enable his apostles to discharge their duty. Yet we must take notice that, ver. 20, he prays *for all those who should believe in him*. He also prayed, Luke xxiii. 34, for all, even for those who crucified him: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

† They must needs be equal, says St. Austin, to whom all things equally belong, and all persons. On which words St. Chrysostom also says, Hom. 81, *Do you see the equality* between the Father and Son?

‡ When we consider how earnestly Christ prays here for the *unity* of his Church, we may conclude it to be a matter of great importance, and that to break this unity by schism, must be a grievous offence against him. Hence the dissolvers of this unity, they who separate themselves from the true faith, once delivered to the saints, are stigmatized by the beloved disciple with the name of *Antichrists*, that is, enemies of Christ and his Church, and as forerunners of the great Antichrist.

* Ps. cviii. 8.

them" for the same end. "And I sanctify myself for them," by devoting and offering myself in sacrifice for them: "that they also may be sanctified in truth," and may become worthy ministers and martyrs of thy truth.

Having thus prayed for his apostles, Jesus now prays for the elect in general, who through their ministry were in all succeeding ages to believe in him. In their behalf, he asks for two favors of the highest import, one of which regarded this life, the other the world to come.

He prays first, that they may be all one, and that by the unity of the same faith and charity they may avoid schism and heresy; the former being a breach of charity, and the latter a division of faith. He solicits for them this union, in honor and imitation of that union which subsists reciprocally between the Father and the Son; in order that this inviolable unity of doctrine and of love among the faithful, may convince the infidel world, that the Father has sent him into the world: it being impossible that so many different persons should agree in the same sentiments, so opposite to those of corrupt nature, had they not imbibed them from one and the same source of truth. He adds that, to effect this union of the faithful, which is in some sort a representation of the unity of the divine persons, he has made them partakers of his divinity by the mystery of his body and blood, which unites into one mystical body all the faithful, since they all feed here upon one and the same divine food. For Jesus being in them by his own proper flesh, and his Father being in *him*, by his divine nature which is united to his flesh by a personal union, hence the Father is in all the faithful by means of the Son, and all the faithful are united to the Father by the Son, and thus attain to the most perfect union imaginable.

"Nor do I pray for them only," (speaking of his apostles,) "but for those also, who through their word" and ministry, "shall believe in me, that they all may be one" by the unity of the same spirit, of the same faith, and the same charity; and that, "as thou, Father," art "in me, and I in thee, they also may be one in us, that" so "the world may believe that thou hast sent me" as the true Messiah, by beholding the union which my disciples will have amongst themselves, and the society thou art pleased they should have with thee. "And the glory which thou hast given me," as Mediator and head of the Church, "I have given to them," by communicating to them at baptism that grace and holiness which makes me glorious, and by giving them for their food my own flesh united to the divinity which I received from thee that they may be one" with us, "as we also," thou and I, "are one." For by thus nourishing them with my own flesh, "I" am "in them, and" as "thou" art always "in me," thou art likewise in them with me, "that they may be perfectly united" among themselves in one body as thou and I are one, "and that the world may know" and be convinced by this our concord, that I and they act by thy commission "and that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them" as members of my mysti-

cal body, as "thou also hast loved me," eternally and unchangeably.

The second favor which Jesus asks of his Father in behalf of the faithful, is that they may be partakers with him of everlasting glory in heaven. "Father," says he, "I will" and desire, "that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me, that they may see" and enjoy "my glory which thou hast given me" from all eternity as God, and to which thou predestinatest me as man, "because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world." O "just Father," who renderest to every one according to his works, "the world" will have no part in this glory, because it "hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known" and believed, "that thou hast sent me. And I have made known thy name" and divine nature "to them, and will make it known" still more and more, by manifesting thy goodness and the tender bowels of thy mercy in their regard, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be" also "in them, and" that "I" likewise may be "in them" by grace and the communion of my body and blood: for in thus possessing me, in whom thou hast placed all thy affection, they will themselves become objects of thy love, and by being united to me as to their head, they will be entitled to share with me in my glory.

In this excellent prayer we see the great zeal which our Lord had for his Father's glory, and the certain reward which was to be the effect of his sufferings. Let his example animate us to labor with similar zeal for God's honor and glory, in hopes of sharing in that glory which he has prepared for all his faithful servants. 2. We see the great love which Christ bore to his disciples. With what warmth and tenderness does he recommend them to the protection of his heavenly Father! The event showed the efficacy of his prayer; since except Judas, whose infidelity he had foretold, they all persevered in the truth, and with wonderful courage and patience propagated it throughout the world. 3. We see how dear the faithful are to Christ, how affectionately he prays for their unity and concord, and how desirous he is of making them partakers with him of eternal glory.

CHAPTER CXXXVII.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. MATT. XXVI. 36 TO 56. MARK XIV. 33 TO 52. LUKE XXII. 39 TO 53. JOHN XVIII. 1 TO 12.

"WHEN Jesus had spoken these things he went out with his disciples over the brook Cedron," which runs at the foot of Mount Olivet, to the east of Jerusalem, and is said to be six or seven feet broad. David, who was a figure of Jesus Christ, passed likewise this torrent in great trouble, when he fled from his rebellious son Absalom. "And he went, according to his custom, to the mountain of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. Then Jesus cometh with them into a village called Gethsemani, where there was a garden,



into which he and his disciples entered. And Judas who betrayed him, knew the place; because Jesus had often resorted thither together with his disciples." This we may consider as the first step of our blessed Lord towards his approaching passion, every minute circumstance of which tended to show to the fullest conviction, 1. That he suffered voluntarily and without compulsion; 2. That being perfectly innocent, his sufferings were absolutely unmerited on his part; 3. That his love for mankind was the sole cause of all his sufferings. Throughout the whole of his sacred passion, as will evidently appear from the sequel, he has clearly evinced this his perfect liberty, his innocence, and his love for us. Thus with regard to his suffering voluntarily, we need no other proof than his resorting knowingly to a place often frequented by him, and consequently well known to Judas, who he was well aware intended to betray him. In fact he went purposely where he knew his enemies would search for him, thus to spare them the trouble of a more tedious pursuit.

The seizure of Jesus was preceded by his sadness in the garden, his prayer to his heavenly father, and the drowsiness of the apostles. Upon his entering into the garden, "he said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go and pray yonder," teaching us hereby to seek retirement and solitude when we converse with God in prayer; and he added, "pray" likewise yourselves, "lest you enter into temptation;" but they neglected this advice and were soon overcome, shamefully abandoning their Master. It was moreover, on the part of Jesus, the effect of a tender condescension to the weakness of his apostles, that made him withdraw himself from them on this occasion, in order thus to hide from them the sight of that mortal sadness, which was about to affect him in so surprising a manner, and which, in their present state, would probably have been to them a subject of scandal. "And he taketh with him Peter, James, and John," who had before been witnesses of his glorious transfiguration, and whom he knew to be more able than the rest to bear so severe a trial; "and he began to fear, and to be heavy, to be sorrowful and sad." Christ our Redeemer permitted, on this occasion, his human nature to be seized with all this fear and anguish,

1. To show that he was true man like us, and liable to all our infirmities, sin only excepted; a truth which was one day to be called in question by the Manichees and Apollinarists.

2. Having charged himself with our sins, he would submit to all the humiliations and pains due to them, and so suffer both in his soul and body.

3. It was to comfort the weakest of his followers, and by his voluntary sadness, teach them that their involuntary sadness and fear at the approach of death, or of any other calamity, is not sinful, provided they, like him, submit their natural repugnance to the will of God.

4. It was to show the great excess of his sufferings, the bare representation of which was sufficient to cast him into a mortal agony and produce these strange effects in his body. Wherefore, he excited in his heart three various sensations of the most poignant

nature, viz. 1. A most lively fear and dread; 2. A most afflicting sadness; 3. An affection of mind, which cannot better be described than as a total desolation of the soul which sees itself ready to be overwhelmed by some great and unavoidable misfortune. The alarming prospect of the most cruel sufferings which the mind of Jesus now represented to his flesh, affected it with a panic so violent, as to cause all his blood to rush towards his heart; but the determined resolution of his will to suffer, caused him to view this death as now actually before his eyes; and under this certainty, his fear was changed into a sadness of heart beyond the reach of all human comfort. In a word, these two sensations jointly concurred to bring his whole sacred humanity to the lowest degree of desolation.

"Then" intimating to his three disciples the great inward agony which he underwent, "he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even to death: stay here and watch with me. And having gone a little further, he himself was withdrawn from them the length of a stone's cast," in order to conceal from them the severity of his conflict; "and kneeling down he prayed,* saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And" to teach us not to disdain help from any of God's creatures, however inferior in dignity, "an angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him" corporeally, that his sufferings might not terminate here, though nature was brought to the last extremity, and was dissolving herself in a mortal sweat: this angel strengthened him likewise spiritually, by encouraging him to suffer from the motives of God's honor and glory, and the salvation of innumerable souls. "And Jesus fell flat on the ground upon his face,* praying; and being in an agony, he prayed the longer;" not that he had any need of prayer himself, but to teach us, by his example, to be particularly instant in our supplications when beset with the greatest difficulties. "And he prayed with a strong cry and tears,† that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him, saying: Oh, my Father, if it be possible,‡ let this cup§ pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. All things are possible to thee, take away this cup from me, but not what I will, but what thou wilt. And" during this conflict betwixt his rational faculty accepting of death, and his inferior nature seeking to be relieved from it, "his sweat was as drops trickling down upon the ground," though in a very cold evening, as appears from their

* It is probable that Jesus first knelt down to pray as mentioned by St. Luke; but that afterwards, as he redoubled his prayer, he lay prostrate on the ground, as St. Matthew and St. Mark relate.

* Should a sinner after this think any posture too humble or troublesome?

† Heb. v.

‡ The condition upon which he requests his petition to be granted was *if it were possible*, viz. if his life could be preserved consistently, 1. With all the ancient types and figures which pointed out his death; 2. With all the prophecies which foretold it; 3. With the various predictions which himself had made to the apostles and to the Jews concerning it; 4. With the divine decree which from all eternity determined his death; 5. With the salvation of all the elect which depended upon the death of their Redeemer. All this was to be reconciled with the exemption here requested by Christ. And yet, however difficult it may appear, it is all included in this universal proposition: *all things* are possible to thee. From hence we may form some idea of the divine omnipotence.

§ Under the name of cup or chalice the Hebrews understand afflictions and calamities, Matt. xx. 22; Isaiah li. 17 Ps. x. 7, and lxxiv. 9, etc.



Christ in the Garden.

making a fire in the high priest's hall.* Owing to the violence of this combat which passed within him, the blood which had flowed collectively to the heart was now impetuously forced back to the extremities, and forcing its way through the pores of the body, came forth in large drops so as to bedew the ground on which he lay prostrate.

We may here look upon Jesus as the forlorn and accursed goat which was turned away into the wilderness: for he was made a curse for us, says the apostle,† going into this solitude with all the sins of the whole world laid upon his head, and all the vengeance of his Father's wrath due to them, now as it were pursuing him.

"And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them asleep through grief. And he said to them: Why sleep you? arise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. And he saith to Peter," who had expressed so much zeal and resolution: "Simon, sleepest thou? What, could not you watch one hour with me? Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing" and ready even to suffer death when the danger is at a distance; "but" in the midst of danger, and when death shows itself at hand, "the flesh is weak," presently disavows the resolution of the spirit, and makes it an unwilling partaker of its weakness. "And going away again," oppressed with grief, "he prayed, saying the same words: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done. And he cometh again, and findeth them sleeping; for their eyes were heavy. And they knew not what to answer him," like to those three comforters of Job, who sat down by him in a deep silence without opening their mouth. "And leaving them he went again, and prayed the third time, saying the self-same words," in all which he would leave us a perfect example of perseverance in prayer, and of resignation and acquiescence under all the appointments of heaven. "And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep now, and take your rest:" for seeing his disciples heavy and overcome by sleep, instead of using harshness, he with great compassion, bid them sleep and rest themselves: but their rest was not long: for a while after he awakened them, saying: "It is enough: the hour is come; behold the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; behold he that will betray me, is at hand. And while he was yet speaking, behold Judas, one of the twelve, having taken" for greater security "a band of soldiers" consisting of 555 men, "and servants from the high-priest and the Pharisees, cometh thither, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, with lanterns and torches,* sent from the chief-priests and elders of the people." As Jesus was unknown to the Romans, and as the servants themselves, although they had frequently seen him, might perhaps mistake his person, "he that betrayed him, had given them a

* Mark xiv. 54.

† Gal. iii. 13.

* It was now full moon, yet they bring torches that they might be sure to find him out, if he should hide himself any where; besides, the sky might be obscured with clouds, and the place whither they were going was shaded with trees.

sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he" whom you seek, "lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully:" thus insinuating that after he should once according to the terms of his agreement, have pointed him out to their notice, he would no longer be answerable for his person; a caution which to him seemed highly necessary, as he might again make his escape out of their hands, as he had already done at Nazareth. Moreover, as the soldiers had orders to seize likewise the apostles, it behooved them carefully to secure the gates of the garden, lest any of them should escape under the opportunity afforded by the light of a full moon. In pursuance therefore of this concerted plan, Judas, "when he was come" to the place, "went before them, and forthwith coming to Jesus, to kiss him, he said: Hail, Rabbi," a kind of salutation common with the Jews; "and" then "kissed him. Jesus," with his usual kindness, to teach us to preserve charity with our greatest enemies, "said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come?" in other words, to what strange and wicked purpose dost thou here take advantage of thy easy access to my person? Then, with a sweetness capable of touching any heart that was not totally obdurate, he adds: "Judas, is it with a kiss* thou betrayest the Son of man?" that is, the Son of God, who to save thee became the Son of man.† "Therefore, Jesus knowing all things that were to come upon him, went forwards" towards the crowd, "and said to them" with great majesty: "Whom seek ye? They answered him Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I AM HE. Judas also, that betrayed him, stood with them. As soon therefore as he said to them I AM HE," as if it had been the terrible name Jehovah in Exodus, "they went backward," like persons thunderstruck, "and fell to the ground;" by which he showed them his all-powerful divinity, and that he suffered only because it was his will.* But they paid no attention to this wonderful miracle of his power. "Again, therefore, he asked, Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way," which implied a prohibition not to seize on any of his apostles, "that the word might be fulfilled which he said: Of those whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one;" mystically signifying that his sufferings were to be our ransom, and his apprehension our freedom.

"Then they," who accompanied Judas, "drew near, and laid hands on Jesus, and held him.† And they that were about him," that is, the disciples, "seeing what would follow, said to him: Lord, shall we strike with the sword? Then Simon Peter, one of those who were with Jesus," without waiting for an answer, "stretching forth his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high-priest,

* Will not this condemn those who cannot bear the presence even of a repenting enemy.

† Jesus usually styled himself by this name, to show the state of humility to which he had reduced himself for our sake

* Isaiah lvii. 30.

† Either St. Matthew and St. Mark relate this by anticipation, or the meaning is, that they held him in such a manner, as not to deprive him of all liberty of acting, but only so as to make themselves masters of his person, and prevent his escaping from them.

and cut off his right ear, and the name of the servant was Malchus."*

The above question and the subsequent stroke given to the high-priest's servant, are by three of the Evangelists attributed to one of the disciples, without naming him: for Peter being yet living when they wrote their gospels, he might have been liable to prosecution on the part of the chief-priest for this opposition to his authority, had the fact been brought home to him by the unanswerable evidence of these his brethren. But as St. John wrote his gospel at the period of about twenty-nine years posterior to the death of Peter, he judged it proper to make us acquainted with this instance of his dauntless courage, in standing up singly in defence of his Master, against a Roman cohort of 555 men, assisted by the servants of the priests, who formed no small addition to the armed band. "But Jesus" checked this impetuous ardor of his apostle, and "answering, said: Forbear; no more. And when he had touched his ear, he healed it;" for he was unwilling to give the least cause of complaint to his enemies. "Then Jesus said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard; for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword:" that is, if by their own private authority they have recourse to the sword, and shed human blood, they deserve to perish, as the law ordains.† Moreover, that they generally do perish, and sooner or later are overtaken by divine justice, is affirmed by many instances of divine vengeance on those who have imbrued their hands in human blood. As to his own person, Jesus declares that he stands not in need of any such protection or force. "Thinkest thou," said he, "that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels.* The chalice, which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled," which declare that so it must be done? Then the band and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him. In that same hour Jesus" reproached them for their seizing him in this manner, and "said to the chief priests and magistrates of the temple, and the ancients that were come to him: Are you come out as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs to apprehend me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."† He thus warned them not to consider his seizure as the effect of their schemes, or of their force, but to attribute it to the decrees of the Almighty. For "all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away," and Peter with the rest; hereby justifying the prediction of Jesus concerning the general dispersion. However, we may consider it as miraculous, that eleven persons should effect their escape from five or

* Malchus had probably behaved on this occasion with some peculiar insolence. He is supposed even to be one of those servants who smote Christ upon the face, after a miraculous power had been exerted in his favor.

† Gen. ix. 6.

* These would amount at least to seventy-two thousand angels, a great army indeed of heavenly spirits against one company of soldiers; but in this our Saviour means no more than a great number.

† The wicked are frequently spurred on by the powers of hell.

six hundred men who had been commissioned to seize them; and this appears the more wonderful by the following circumstance, which took place on the occasion. "A certain young man," probably much attached to Jesus, "followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and" in his being noticed by some of the crowd, "they laid hold on him. But he casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked," and so escaped to his own house. It is not known who this young man was. He does not appear to have been St. John or St. James, as some have imagined, but rather some person from the village of Gethsemani, who upon the noise came hastily out of bed to see what was the matter. St. Mark mentions this particular, to insinuate the singular protection of Jesus over his apostles, who made their escape on this occasion, though within the inclosure of the garden, and notwithstanding the orders given by the high-priests to apprehend them. The truth was, that Christ had forbidden the Jews to molest his disciples, and thus had first bound fast *their hands* before he allowed his own to be confined.

In considering the passion of Christ, the pious Christian may occasionally attend to the following particulars;

1. *Who* is he that suffers? It is Jesus Christ the word and wisdom of the eternal Father, who is innocence itself.

2. *What* is it that he suffers? A bloody sweat, whipping at the pillar, crowning with thorns, every species of insult and outrage, and finally, the death of the cross.

3. *Why* does he suffer so great ignominies and torments? For our salvation, and the sins of all mankind; if he had not suffered, we must all have been condemned to eternal torments.

4. From *whom* does he suffer all this? From his own countrymen whom he so tenderly loved.

5. *At what period of life* did he suffer? In the very flower of his age.

6. *Where* did he suffer? In the most public place, exposed to the view of all, for all were to benefit by his sufferings, if they made a proper use of them.

7. How is it possible that he should submit to all these sufferings? He himself alone knows the extent of his motives and views in making this astonishing sacrifice. We may however affirm, that he was influenced on this occasion by his great love for his Father's honor, which had been violated by sin, and by his zeal for the salvation of mankind, which could only be effected by his infinite merits. Yes, it was this divine charity which induced him to become man, to be circumcised as a sinner, and finally to shed the last drop of blood on a disgraceful cross.

8. The principle virtues which he displayed in his sufferings, were his meekness, his humility, his patience, his zeal and courage; and these he chiefly recommends to his followers.

CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

JESUS IS EXAMINED AND JUDGED BY CAIAPHAS. MATT. XXVI. 57 TO 67. MARK XIV. 35 TO 64. LUKE XXII. 55 TO 71. JOHN XVIII. 15 TO 19.

HAVING thus given substantial proof of his perfect liberty in regard to every circumstance of his seizure, and consequently of his subsequent passion, Jesus next evinces his innocence in a triumphant manner before three several tribunals. The first was that of Caiaphas, where he was condemned: the second was that of Herod, where he was discharged as guiltless: the third was that of Pilate, where, though pronounced guiltless, he was condemned to an ignominious death.

"And they led him away to Annas first;* for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high-priest of that year. Now Caiaphas was he who had given the counsel† to the Jews: that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." From Annas "they led him to Caiaphas the high-priest, where all the priests, and the scribes, and the ancients, were assembled together. And Peter followed him afar off," actuated at the same time by love and fear: the love he bore Jesus urged him on, and the apprehension of death hindered him from a nearer approach to his person, now in the hands of his enemies: "and so did another disciple follow on this occasion, and that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple who was known to the high-priest, went out and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter: and when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them, at the fire, and warmed himself, that he might see the result. The high-priest then," instead of producing a charge against Jesus, and hearing his defence, "asked him" him "of his disciples and of his doctrine," two subjects which he was particularly earnest to investigate, in hopes of extorting something that might tend to criminate him. He asked, therefore, by what authority he formed to himself disciples, and what was the doctrine he taught them: but these two questions are visibly reducible to one, viz. to that of his doctrine: for he who teaches nothing but the truth, is evidently authorized by all laws to form to himself disciples. This consideration caused Jesus to combine the question concerning his disciples, with the question concerning the truth of his doctrine; and for the justification of the latter, he referred himself to the testimony

* Jesus was first brought before Annas, who by Josephus is called Ananus, whose house was perhaps in the way; or to gratify the old man with the sight of so remarkable a person now a prisoner and in chains. But nothing was done against him there; for what St. John mentions as done by the high-priest, is not to be understood of Annas, but of Caiaphas, which St. John sufficently indicates, by expressly saying, that Caiaphas was the high-priest for that year.

† This added to show, that he was Christ's inveterate enemy, and therefore would be solicitous to have his own project to take effect.

of living witnesses. On a subject of this nature, he said that the high-priest ought to have interrogated others rather than himself: 1. Because in this examination the point was not concerning his present sentiments, for which he was not accountable to any man, but concerning the doctrine which he had hitherto announced to the world, and whether it was such as to justify his being seized and punished. Now every assurance which he might give of having taught sound and orthodox doctrine, would avail nothing towards his justification in the eyes of his accusers, the evidence of the accused party not being admissible in his own behalf. It was not therefore to himself they should appeal, but to the evidence of those who had heard his doctrine, and who could give them the minutest information concerning his principles.

But perhaps the high-priest might allege, that he broached his doctrine in private by night, or to such disciples only as could be depended upon for their secresy. To this "Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort, and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them: behold, they know what things I have said," and therefore, if I have been faulty in sowing errors, or plotting sedition, you may have enow to bear witness of it, and upon their legal testimony, may proceed to acquit or condemn me. Nothing could be more reasonable, or more in rule, than this answer. "And" yet, "when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by, gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou to the high-priest so? Jesus" meekly "answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil," and leave the vindication of it to the judge: "but if well, why strikest thou me?"* This happened in the house of Caiaphas the high-priest; for "Annas" had sent him bound"† there, as mentioned above.

After having failed in the attempt to draw Jesus into a snare by the above captious interrogation, "the chief priests and the whole council" found themselves under the necessity of having recourse to the evidence of others, agreeably to what he himself had suggested to them. And they "sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they found none" sufficient, "whereas many false witnesses had come in;" a circumstance which decidedly proves the innocence of Jesus. "For many bore false witness against him, and their evidence did not agree" together, as it usually happens on such occasions. Unjust witnesses have risen up against me," says the Psalmist, "and iniquity hath lied to itself."* "And last of all there came two false witnesses, and rising up, they bore false witness against him, saying: We have heard him say: I am able to detsroy the temple of God, and after three days to re-

* It appears from this defence which Jesus makes for himself, that we are not to understand *literally* his precept of *turning the other cheek to him that smites us*, since instead of this, we find him modestly vindicating the innocence of his words.

† St. John has *misit* for *miserat*. It is to be observed, that the Hebrews made no use of the præter-pluperfect tense in their verbs. Hence they wrote venerunt for venerant misit for miserat.

* Psalm xxvi. 12.

build it; I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days, I will build another, not made with hands. And their testimony did not agree," nor was it sufficient for his condemnation. The one witnessed, that he said absolutely he would destroy it, *destruam:* the other, that he could or was able to destroy it, *possum destruere:* whereas his words were neither destruam nor possom destruere; but *solvite*, destroy you this temple. Moreover Christ spoke of the temple of his body, as being the temple of the divinity, and they of the material temple at Jerusalem. It is likewise probable that they made other additions and false constructions not mentioned by the evangelists. "And the high-priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: answerest thou nothing to the things laid to thy charge by these men?" (As if he had forgotten, that for the last words which he spoke in his own defence, he had suffered him to be struck on the face.) "But he held his peace and answered nothing," and that for many reasons: 1. Because their testimony contradicting and destroying itself, needed no further confutation. 2. Because he forsaw his speaking would have no good effect upon his malicious accusers and judges, but would rather serve to increase their guilt. 3. To show the perfect moderation and mastery of his passions, and a most entire resignation to his Father's will, "leaving us an example," as St. Peter says, "that we should follow his steps."*

We may be at a loss to guess the reason why the priests and Pharisees, who had long resolved to compass the destruction of Jesus, should now affect to be so scrupulous as to the formality of such juridical depositions as might appear to the world neither inconsistent with truth, nor altogether frivolous. But the truth is, 1. They were under the necessity of preserving at least the outward appearance of moderation and decorum, and in so doing, their character in the public opinion was in some degree concerned. They were consequently interested in assuming rather the appearance of their religious rites, than of being the oppressors of innocence. Thus, their fixed hatred of Jesus was absolutely to be cloaked under the plausible garb of a zeal for public justice, and under the apparent tenderness of a candid juridical trial. 2. They were sensible that Pilate would not readily condemn a person of such public fame as Jesus to death, upon the evidence of frivolous and unsupported testimony, and that to proceed to such extremity, he would clearly require more solid grounds than a simple transgression of their traditions, or a mere contempt of their ceremonies.

We may, from the text of St Luke, gather that the principal persons among the Jews, who acted as the accusers of Jesus, finding, that in consequence of the contradictory testimony of the witnesses, they could now allege nothing more to his disadvantage, withdrew during the remainder of the night, for the purpose both of taking their necessary rest, and of gaining further time to plot his destruction by means of fresh accusations. Perhaps, with a view of being nearer the council room, they might pass the night in the house

* 1 Peter ii. 23.

of Caiphas, to be in readiness the following day, to finish this important business which they had left incomplete. In the interim, they placed Jesus in the custody of their servants, "and the men that held him, mocked him,* and struck him" with their fists, and plucked off his hair.† "And they blindfolded him, and smote his face. And they asked him, saying: Prophesy who is he that struck thee? And blaspheming, many other things they said against him," loading him with every species of insult which their own malice, and that of the devil could suggest.

"And as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief priest and scribes met together, and brought him" again "before the council, saying: If thou be Christ, tell us:" they purposely concerted this unanimous request, as most likely to obtain a reply from him, which, if it proved to be in the affirmative, they would instantly deem a sufficient plea for their condemning him to death. "And he replied: If I should tell you, you would not believe me, and if" to prove it "I ask" you any thing, "you will not answer me, nor dismiss me. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting at the right hand of the power of God. They all then said: Art thou therefore the Son of God? Who said: You say it, for I am." Which the Jews considered as a modest way of affirming anything relating to their own commendation. "Again the high-priest asked of him, and said to him: Art thou Christ, the Son of the blessed God? I adjure thee, by the living God,* that thou tell us, if thou art Christ the Son of God. Jesus," out of reverence for that sacred name, replied: Thou hast said it; I am really so." It is true, the condition in which you see me at present, bears no proportion to that high and sublime dignity; "nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter" the day will come, when "you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This David and Daniel had foretold of the Messiah.†

Jesus here spoke of the day of judgment, when these iniquitous judges will be brought to appear before him, and when, with their own eyes, they shall behold him in all his glory and majesty. He thus contrasted his future glory with his present state of humiliation, and the sentence which he will there pronounce against them, with that sentence which they now so unjustly meditated to pronounce against him. He likewise made this public avowal, as an example to all succeeding martyrs, he being the first to lay down his life in support of that fundamental truth which they afterwards maintained at the expense of their lives. "Then the high-priest rent his garments,‡ saying: He hath blasphemed: what need we any more

* We do honor to the name of Christ, when we follow his example, and suffer injuries without upbraiding and complaints.

† Isaiah l. 6

* This method of adjuring persons by the living God, was sometimes practised in the Jewish courts, when in want of some other evidence. See 1 Kings viii. 31, 32; Numbers v. 19; 1 Thess. v. 27. The person thus interrogated, was obliged to speak truth, and in all doubtful cases, his confession or denial was decisive, either to acquit or condemn him. See Calmet.

† Ps. cix. 1. Daniel vii. 13.

‡ This was usual with the eastern nations, in order to ex-

witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy" against God, whose Son he calls himself. "What is your opinion? But they answered and said: He is guilty of death. What need we any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. Who all condemned him to be guilty of death. Then some began to spit in his face," which was the greatest note of infamy and disgrace among the Jews,* "and to cover his face, and to buffet him. And others struck his face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck thee? And the servants," vulgarly imitating their self-willed masters in this inhuman treatment, "struck him" also "with the palms of their hands," to perplex him as it were by their united blows, had he, in compliance with their taunting suggestions, been inclined to name his tormentors. All these things were foretold of the Messiah by David in the Psalms, and by the prophets, especially Isaiah.* Let us compassionate our blessed Lord under these his sufferings, and in opposition to this cruel malice of his enemies, let his followers cry out with the angel in the Apocalypse, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive power and divinity, honor and glory, for ever and ever.*

We must not confound the insults here offered to Jesus with those of the preceding night. The latter are, by the sacred text, attributed to the servants who held Jesus in custody: *the men that held him.* Whereas the insults in the morning were the act and deed of those very judges who had just condemned him to death, *some of whom began to spit upon him.* Hence St. Mark, speaking of these last insults, carefully distinguishes between the part of the masters and that of their servants, by adding that, after some of the former had begun to spit upon him, the *servants* also *smote him upon the face.*

press their horror on any particular occasions. It was however forbidden the high-priest, not only as to his sacerdotal vestments, but also as to his other garments, Lev. xxi. 10, because he was not to appear before God in the habit of a *mourner:* but the Scribes and Pharisees had so qualified that precept, as to allow him to rend his clothes at the *bottom*, though he was not permitted to do it from *the top* to the breast.

* See Deut. xxv. 9.

CHAPTER CXXXIX.

PETER'S DENIAL AND REPENTANCE. MATT. XXVI. 69 TO 73. MARK XIV. 66 TO 72. LUKE XXII. 56 TO 62. JOHN XVIII. 17 TO 27.

LET us now return to the garden of Olives, to trace the particulars of what happened to Peter. After surrendering his sword into the hands of some other person, he followed Jesus at a distance, as we have seen above, in company with another disciple,† who was

* See chap. l. 6. c. liii. 2, etc.

† It is not known who this disciple was that introduced Peter; we may however ascertain three circumstances concerning him: 1. That he was not St. John, as some have imagined, nor one of the twelve apostles, since he was known and held in some estimation by the high-priest. 2. That on the same account he was a disciple of Jesus only in private, as was Nicodemus and others; otherwise he would have been in equal danger with Peter from such a connection. 3. That he must have been a person of some listinction, by his rank or fortune.

known to the high-priest, and who procured his admission into the court where Jesus was undergoing his examination. "Now when Peter was in the court below, one of the maid-servants of the high-priest, that was portress, came; and when she had seen Peter warming himself, and had looked at him, she said" to all those who were there present: "This man also was with him." Then addressing herself to Peter himself, she added: "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: Woman, I know him not. I am not one of his disciples,* I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest." This he said under the conviction of her not being able to bring proof of her assertion. Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold,† and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter, also standing and warming himself." Sensible, however, of his being now discovered, and of its being therefore unsafe for him to remain there any longer, he resolved to depart from the place. "And" with this view "he went forth before the court, and the cock crew" for the first time. Unfortunately for Peter, "as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and" taking particular notice of him, "she saith to them that were there: This man also" (pointing to Peter) "was with Jesus of Nazareth."‡ This unexpected challenge of his person caused him to alter his plan, and to return again, lest he should seem to fly as conscious of the truth of the accusation. He probably too was afraid, lest the portress, who recollected his features, should now refuse to open the door to him, whence his attempting to escape might be construed as an avowal of what was laid to his charge. He deemed it therefore the most prudent measure, in the present emergency, to replace himself among the servants, as it were to warm himself, and thus openly to avoid the accusation, "And after a little while, another seeing him standing and warming himself, said: Thou also art one of them." The others joined in the same question, and "they said therefore to him: Art not thou also one of his disciples? But he denied again with an oath, and said, I am not, I do not know the man. After the space as it were of one hour, another man, one of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter had cut off, affirmed it, saying: Of a truth this man was also with him, for he is also a Galilean, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? And" now "they that stood by came and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them; for even thy speech doth discover thee," that thou art a Galilean. Again therefore Peter denied, and he began to curse and to swear," saying: "I know not this man of whom you speak. I know not what

* So saith every one who obeys not his gospel.

† The Jews themselves allow, as Dr. Light informs us, that there might be frost or snow at the time of the Passover, and it was no uncommon thing for dews to fall at that time, which would make the air cold until the sun had exhaled them.

‡ Peter did not go out of the house, but out of the hall, where he returned again soon afterwards. For, as it is clear from St. Mark, that Peter went out of the hall, and from St. John, that he was still at the fire when he denied Jesus the second time, we must suppose, that at Peter's going out of the hall, a servant-maid said to those that were there, "*This man also was with Jesus* of Nazareth.

thou sayest; and immediately as he was yet speaking, the cock crew again. And the Lord turning looked at Peter," and touched his heart with a strong and efficacious grace. "And Peter remembered the words of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice; and going out he wept bitterly" for his fault; a practice which he is said ever afterwards to have observed, as often as he heard the cock crow. Hence St. Peter has ever been considered as the model of all true penitents.

In this history we must distinctly consider the several denials of Peter by the separate times of his being attacked upon this subject, and not by the precise number of words spoken by him. Now the servants returned to the charge against him three different times, and there can be no doubt but that at each time many answers passed on both sides. We may observe on this occasion, how easily one fall draws on another, and generally a deeper, as in the present case. Peter's first denial was a simple untruth; the second was an untruth, but corroborated with an oath, which is called perjury; the third added to perjury, horrible imprecations against himself.

CHAPTER CXL.

JESUS IS DELIVERED UP TO PILATE.—THE DEATH OF JUDAS. MATT. XXVI. 1 TO 10. MARK XV. 1. LUKE XXIII. 1. JOHN XVIII. 28.

"Now in the morning early, the chief-priests, with the ancients and the scribes," after they had wreaked their vengeance upon Jesus by the vilest treatment of his person, "took counsel against him, that they might put him to death;" for they could not execute this themselves, as the power of life and death had been taken from them about three years before. Besides, they were glad to throw upon another person the odium of a crime, of which in fact they were certainly guilty. As both Jews and Gentiles were to have an equal share in the benefit of Christ's death, so were they likewise in the inflicting of it; that as all receive the mercy of being saved by his blood, so none should be freed from the guilt of shedding it.

"And the whole multitude of them rising up, brought him bound from Caiphas into the palace of the prætor, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor," not so much to examine whether he were guilty, as to ratify the sentence of death which they had already pronounced against him. "And they entered not into the palace" or court of the governor, he being a heathen, "that they might not be defiled, but might eat the (feast of the) Passover."*

* St. John does not here speak of the Paschal lamb, which the Jews as well as our Saviour had eaten the night before. This word Passover comprehends not only the Paschal solemnity of the lamb, but also all the sacrifices that were to be eaten with unleavened bread during the seven days of the Paschal solemnity, as appears from different passages of scripture, as Deut. xvi. 2. "Thou shalt offer up the phase or passover to the Lord of sheep and *oxen*," and 2 Paral. xxx. 8. It was therefore of these Paschal sacrifices in gene-

"Then Judas who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said What is that to us? look thou to it." He had all along hoped, that, by a miracle, Jesus would escape from the hands of his enemies, as he had done on former occasions; but being disappointed in this hope, (which indeed Jesus had sufficiently precluded by declaring on the preceding evening that the Son of man was then finishing the course which had been assigned to him,) his mind sunk; he was overwhelmed with insupportable anguish, and at last reduced to a state of the utmost despair. "And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed:* and went and hanged himself with a halter, and being hanged,† he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out.‡ But," after the death of Judas, "the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona," or treasury of the temple, "because it is the price of blood. And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field," which was out of the city to the south "in order to be a burying place for strangers," especially for the Roman soldiers who had hitherto been interred in the common burying place of the Jews, which was considered as a great abomination. Thus the price of Jesus's blood was employed to the advantage of the Gentiles, and "for this cause that field was called Haceldama, that is, the field of blood,* even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy† the prophet, saying: And they took" (from Judas) "the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued" at that sum, "whom they prized of the children of Israel," by agreeing with Jesus for that purpose. "And they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed" or decreed for me. This is the sense of the prophecy, the words being abridged in the gospel.

The cause which brought Judas to this unhappy end, was no other than the love of money. This was his predominant passion. This he indulged at first in small injustices, by the opportunity of carrying the common purse; and as he neglected to mortify his evil inclinations, they insensibly gained ground upon him, till they introduced Satan into the possession of his whole soul, and so prevailed upon

ral, and not of the paschal lamb, that the priest designed to partake, and on that account refused to enter into the palace of Pilate. See Tillemont against Lami.

* A man may see his sin, abhor it, confess it, and yet be a false penitent, as Judas was.

† Though the Greek word may sometimes signify a suffocation of grief, yet it signifies also to be strangled with a rope, as translated by Erasmus. So it is in the ancient Syriac version, and the same Greek word is made use of, 2 Kings xvii., as to Achitopel's death.

‡ Acts i. 18.

* At present it is named the *holy field*, from the veneration it has obtained among Christians. It is a small plot of ground, not above 300 yards long and about 15 yards broad. A little below the *holy field* is shown an intricate cave or sepulchre, consisting of several rooms, one within another, in which the apostles are said to have hid themselves, when they forsook their Master and fled. Wells's Geography of the New Testament.

† *Jeremy* is now found in all the Latin copies, and is the general reading in the Greek, whereas the passage is found in Zachary xi. 12. Some judge it to have been in some writing now lost of Jeremy, for St. Jerom says, he found it in a writing of Jeremy which was not canonical. Others conjecture that Zachary had the name of Jeremy, or that St. Matthew put neither Jeremy nor Zachary, but simply "the prophet," as he usually does, and that the name of Jeremy crept into the text. For it is not in the Syriac, and St. Austin affirms, that it was not in several Latin copies.

him to betray and sell his Lord and Master. What an instructive lesson is this for us to beware of our passions, and to stifle them betimes, lest they grow headstrong by being neglected in the beginning! Especially we should take care of that cheating vice, avarice the source of innumerable evils; which so insensibly poisons the mind, that few or none are willing to think themselves infected with it. Hence how many pretexts and pretences are made use of to cloak the evil! How many ways of palliating even frauds, injustices, usuries, and other crimes, to the ruin of innumerable souls!

CHAPTER CXLI.

JESUS IS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE, WHO SENDS HIM TO HEROD. MATT. XXVII. 11 TO 14 MARK XV. 3 TO 5. LUKE XXIII. 4 TO 12. JOHN XVIII. 29 TO 38.

"PILATE, therefore," to accommodate himself to the vain scruples of the Jews, "went out to them, and said: What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said to him: If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee;" as if their will were a certain and infallible rule of justice, and that he ought by no means to call in question the guilt of a man condemned by judges of such strict impartiality. "Pilate therefore said to them: Take you him and judge him according to your law. The Jews, therefore, said to him: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he said signifying what death he should die:" for had the Jews condemned him according to the law, they could have sentenced him to no other capital punishment but that of being stoned to death, whereas if Pilate decreed him to die, it would be by the cross, in conformity with the usual practice of the Romans.

The Jews, finding that the governor was unwilling to condemn Jesus on their bare report, or to decide without giving him an impartial hearing, "began to accuse him" on three various heads, "saying: We have found this man perverting our nation" by dangerous novelties, "and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar,* and pretending to be Christ the king." This last was a capital crime against the Roman people, when claimed in opposition to the authority of the emperor.

Pilate instantly saw that these imputed crimes were mere inventions of calumny, and therefore began to consider by what means he could deliver Jesus out of their hands. For this purpose he made use of three very different expedients: the first of which was consistent with reason and justice; the second, in the highest degree ignominious; and the third an instance of the most barbarous cruelty.

*A manifest falsehood; see Matt. xxii. We may observe that our Lord's accusers, when they came before Pilate, said nothing of his pretended blasphemy, his destruction of the temple, or violation of the law of Moses, because these were questions which the governor they knew would not concern himself, and therefore they forged such accusations against him as they thought might make him odious and suspected to the Roman government, and oblige Pilate to be severe against him.

Pilate began by a juridical investigation of the crimes imputed to Jesus, which he did first in his own judicial capacity, and afterwards by means of Herod. Of the three chief heads of accusation, he laid no great stress upon that of his having seduced the people, which supposed crime he considered as not within his jurisdiction. He seemed to pay no greater regard to that of his having opposed the gathering of the tributes, which had never been made the subject of complaint by the publicans or tax-gatherers, as most certainly would have been the case, had it been well founded. His assumed quality of king attracted Pilate's whole attention, and the importance of the subject naturally led him to sift it to the bottom. "Pilate, therefore, went into the hall again, and called Jesus." And Jesus stood before the governor as a criminal, with his hands tied: "and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus," who could not have heard from the hall what the Jews had said to Pilate against him, "answered: Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee of me?" Thus insinuating that it came from his malicious adversaries. "Pilate answered," somewhat peevishly, "Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee up to me. What hast thou done?" He thus gave him to understand, that the question he proposed to him in his official capacity, originated not from any curiosity on his part, but that since the chief magistrates had delivered him up as a person affecting royalty, he now sought for information on the subject, in order that being apprized of what he had to say in his own defence, he might be enabled to pass judgment with the greater impartiality. "Jesus answered," and explained the nature of that kingdom which he claimed as his own, in such a manner as to do away at once all grounds of jealousy on the part of the Roman emperor: "My kingdom," says he, "is not of this world,"* and therefore nowise prejudicial to Cæsar's authority: it is a spiritual kingdom, of which the minds of men are the uncontrolled and voluntary subjects. "If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive" to defend me with an armed force, so "that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus" modestly "answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth" of God, and establish his worship among men. "Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice," whether speaking to him outwardly by preaching, or by admonishing him inwardly by secret inspirations. Hence it clearly appeared that, though he were a king, this ought not to alarm the jealousy of Cæsar. In fact, the subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom are no other than

* Some heretics and modern innovators have made a handle of these words of Christ, and have drawn from them inferences inimical to that authority which he left with his Church for the correction of error and the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline. St. Austin introduces our Saviour commenting upon his own text in the following manner: "Give ear ye Jews and Gentiles, ye men of high and low degree, *My kingdom is not of this world*, nevertheless, as *I am a king*, I therefore have my own kingdom, my own ministers, my own officers, and my own system of government. Be not afraid that I should obstruct your government." St. Aug. Trac. 15, in Joan.

the hearts and wills of mankind, his absolute orders are the efficacious attractions of grace, and the obedience and subjection he requires are the persuasion of the mind and the consent of the will to believe and practise what he commands. "Pilate," not perfectly understanding this explanation of Jesus concerning truth "saith to him: What is the truth? And when he had said this," apparently without waiting for any answer, "he went out again to the Jews, and said to the chief priests and to the people: I find no cause," or crime, "in this man." We here view Pilate in the favorable light of a judge pleading the cause of the accused party before his accusers, and what is extraordinary, a pagan judge acting the part of an advocate in behalf of a Jewish king, whom he endeavors to screen from the malevolence of his own subjects.

"And when Jesus was accused by the chief priests and ancients in many things, he answered nothing. Pilate again asked him, saying: Dost thou not hear, how great testimonies they allege against thee? Answerest thou nothing? Behold, in how many things they accuse thee. But Jesus still answered nothing to any word, so that the governor wondered very much," that one who had the appearance of a sober rational man, not devoid of eloquence, and openly favored by his judge, should yet, though attacked by his mortal enemies, refuse to plead in his own defence, and that he should possess the greatest peace and tranquility of soul under their heaviest accusations.

We must here consider the silence of Jesus as a further convincing proof of the perfect freedom with which he offered himself to suffer death for us; and the favorable disposition which Pilate showed towards him is deservedly to be deemed as an illustrious attestation of his innocence. Let not this silence of Jesus be a subject of wonder: he had previously planned the whole of his conduct with regard to the various questions which should be put to him. As to such truths as would render him unpopular, these he would avow as being likely to forward his condemnation, yet so that he cautiously purifies them of that venom infused into them by the misrepresentations of the Jews. But, on the contrary, if the subjects alleged against him were mere calumnies, to these he resolved to make no reply, but to leave his cause to the discernment of his judge; a judge being, in fact, more deeply interested not to pronounce sentence against an innocent person, than is the innocent person to defend his own life. Lastly, he resolved to observe a similar silence, where the questions addressed to him had no material reference to the charges of guilt imputed to him.

The priests and scribes could not but observe, that Pilate was favorably disposed towards Jesus: "but" on that account, "they were more earnest, saying: "He stirreth up the people, teaching all over Judea,* beginning from Galilee" first, the outskirts of the country, and noted for rebellions, and

* Meaning by Judea the kingdom of Herod divided into tetrarchates. Pilate's government did not extend to Galilee, it included Judea only. Herod Antipas, the Son of Herod the Great, was at this time king or tetrarch of Galilee, and Jesus was consequently his subject.

so coming up "to this place:" alluding perhaps to his last triumphal entry into the city on Palm-Sunday. "And Pilate hearing of Galilee, asked if he were a man of Galilee. And as soon as he perceived that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also at Jerusalem in those days" on account of the Passover. Pilate was perhaps desirous to rid himself of this unpleasant business with as little displeasure to the Jews as possible; and probably forwarded to Herod every deposition of the evidence which had been hitherto made relatively to this cause. "Now Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad: for he had been desirous a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him, and hoped to see some miracle done by him." But Jesus, ready and liberal as he was to exert his power in in favor of the poor and afflicted, would not gratify the tyrant's curiosity on this occasion, nor do any thing to incline him to set him at liberty. "He put then many questions to him: but he answered him nothing," being perfectly resigned to his Father's will, and thirsting only for the salvation of the world, which was to be effected by his sufferings and death. "And the chief priests and the scribes who had followed Jesus, stood by earnestly accusing him. But Herod* with his guard despised him," judging from his silence, that he was unable to answer for himself: and to show that the idea which he formed of his royalty was more the subject of laughter than of any serious apprehension, "he with scorn clothed him in a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate," the people deriding and hooting at him as he passed along, according to that of the thirty-first Psalm, verse 8, "All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day; for before they were enemies to one another."* This reconciliation of a pagan with a Jew, denoted the reconciliation about to be effected by the blood of Christ, between both Jew and Gentile, who were thus to be united into one people and one body; *for he is our peace*, says the apostle,† *who hath made both one, breaking down the middle wall of partition.*

We behold on this occasion Jesus Christ, the eternal Wisdom of the Father, treated by the world as a fool, and the great King of heaven and earth abused as a mock king, and an idle pretender to royalty. Let us at least who are his followers ever acknowledge him for the true king of our hearts, and embrace his doctrine as the true wisdom of God, however contradicted by men and hidden by them under the fool's coat which they endeavor to throw over it by their scoffs and ludicrous misrepresentations.

* Herod was afterwards, by divine justice, ejected from his government, in exile and disgrace,.

* It is generally thought that the cause of this difference between them, was the massacre by Pilate of some Galileans at Jerusalem in the time of the Passover, Luc. xiii. 1.

† Eph. ii. 14.

CHAPTER CXLII.

THE JEWS PREFER BARABBAS TO JESUS. HE IS SCOURGED AT THE PILLAR. MATT. XXVII. 15 TO 25. MARK XV. 7 TO 19. LUKE XXIII. 13 TO 25. JOHN XIX. 1 TO 15.

As soon as Jesus was brought back to the prætorium, Pilate drew every favorable argument in his power from the two separate examinations which he had undergone; "and calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, he said to them: You have presented to me this man, as one perverting the people, and behold, examining him before you. I find no cause in him as to those things which you lay to his charge: nor hath Herod: for I remitted you to him: and behold, nothing has been done against him, as if he deserved death. When therefore I have chastised him, I will release him.

"Now upon the solemn day" of the Passover, "the governor was accustomed, and was obliged to set at liberty one prisoner, whom they should desire to have," in memory of their being delivered on that day from the slavery of Egypt, and the sword of the destroying angel: "and he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas, a robber, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder. Pilate judged this wretch to be extremely suitable to his purpose of liberating Jesus, as he was deservedly held in great horror by the people; and the more so, because in all preceding instances it was a condition generally acknowledged, that the prisoner whose enlargement they solicited, ought to have some favorable trait in his character, or some mitigating circumstance in his guilt, to render him a proper object of mercy. "The multitude, being gathered together, they began to desire" that Pilate would do "as he had ever done to them," and pardon a culprit at their intercession, a favor which they considered as a matter of right. "Pilate saith to them: I find no cause at all in" Jesus. "But you have a custom, that I should release one unto you at the Passover: will you therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up out of envy:"* but he never imagined they would carry their resentment so far, as to prefer a man guilty of sedition and murder, before an innocent person. At the same time it is manifest, that however well-intentioned the measure might have been for rescuing Jesus from an ignominious death, it yet was highly derogatory to him, to be indebted for

* Since envy is a vice which put Jesus Christ to death, how watchful should all Christians be against every degree of that sin. See St. Chrys. Hom. 40, in Matt.

his life to the infamous Barabbas; and no less unjust in Pilate to risk, by this comparison, his being postponed to to one who was avowedly branded with the very worst of crimes. "And as he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream on his account."* This unexpected event more and more confirmed the governor in his former resolution of rescuing Jesus from the bloody designs of his enemies: "but the chief priests and ancients," by their authority and persuasions, "moved the people" to petition that he would rather release Barabbas to them and destroy Jesus;" representing perhaps his pretended blasphemies and violations of the Mosaic law as much more heinous and dangerous to the nation than the guilt of Barabbas. "And the governor answering said to them" again, "Whether of the two will you have to be released unto you? But the whole multitude together cried out, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. And Pilate again answering, saith to them, desiring to release Jesus: What will you then that I do to the King of the Jews, who is called Christ? But they again cried out," callous to all the feelings of tenderness: "Crucify him, crucify him." Pilate however, yet persevering in his merciful intention, "said to them the third time. Why, what evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. But they cried out the more, with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified; and their voices prevailed."

At this period the fortitude which Pilate had hitherto evinced, seemed visibly to give way. He now began to think of employing the third measure which had previously occurred to his mind for diverting the Jews from their sanguinary purpose, but which, for its cruelty, he had not yet thought proper to put in execution. He wished to compound with this stubborn and seditious people, who loudly called out for the immediate execution of Jesus: he offered to concede to them so much of their request as would allow him to retain only that small and miserable portion of life which would remain to him after a most trying and bloody scourging. To avoid putting him to death, he condemned him to a punishment which, without taking away his life, he judged might be sufficient to satisfy the rage of the Jews. Yet what a most crying injustice! what cruel pity was this in Pilate, thus to inflict so severe a punishment on the *innocent*, in order to satisfy the furious rage of an infatuated populace! "Then Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him" at a pillar, in the most cruel manner. Of the severity of this punishment we may form some idea, 1. From the character of those by whom it was inflicted, who being pagans would show no mercy to

* Baronius cites St. Ignatius, in his Epistle to St. Polycarp, among those who believe this dream of Pilate's wife to proceed from the devil, with a view to prevent the death of Jesus Christ, from which he began to apprehend the overthrow of his empire; but most other fathers are of a contrary opinion, as St. Athan. t. 1, p. 163, Origen, Hil., etc., who say that it proceeded from Almighty God, not with the design of delivering Jesus, but of attesting in this public manner his innocence, by the voice of a person who could not be supposed in the least interested in pleading his cause. According to Nicephorus, lib. 1. c. 30, her name was Procule, and she is said afterwards to have believed in Christ, and is honored by the Greeks among the saints.



Scourging of Christ

Jewish delinquents; 2. From the end or view which the governor proposed to himself by this cruel treatment, which was to soften the barbarous hearts of the Jews towards Jesus, which could not have been effected but by a scourging unusually severe. It therefore became necessary for this purpose to reduce him to a condition truly pitiable, such as might inspire even their stony hearts with compassion. "The soldiers," who attended during this inhuman scene and were the ministers of it, were not yet satisfied: but afterwards "led him into the court of the palace, and gathered together unto him the whole band," consisting of about 655," and stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him, and platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand," to make him like a king, as Herod had done. "And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him and began to salute him" by way of his inauguration, "and coming to him, they said: Hail, King of the Jews, and they gave him blows; and they struck his head with a reed; and they spit on him, and bowing their knees, they worshipped him." We abhor this cruel barbarity of the Jews, which however is imitated by numbers of Christians, who while they pretend to adore Jesus Christ as their Lord, yet mock at him now reigning in heaven, by violating his most sacred laws, and despising his commandments. "Pilate therefere went forth again, and," after this cruel and bloody flagellation of Jesus, "saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. Jesus therefore went forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and he saith to them," not doubting but that the sight of so lamentable a spectacle would melt their stony hearts into pity and remorse; "Behold the man!" See this rueful spectacle of suffering innocence, and at length show him some compassion. By this public exhibition of his person in so wretched a state, Pilate made an open avowal of his own injustice in inflicting such cruelties upon one, against whom no other crime could be alleged but that of having incurred the displeasure of the chief priests; and he hence left them to conclude, that had he found Jesus guilty of any crimes deserving of punishment, he, on his part, would not have sought to screen him from justice. But this wicked judge reaped not the fruit which he expected from this barbarous measure. After having so far complied with their sanguinary request, as to imbrue his hands in Christ's innocent blood, he was less able to withstand their further attacks. They considered this acquiescence on his part in no other light than as a pledge of his further compliance with their demands. "When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants had seen" Jesus coming forward on the platform, fearing lest so affecting a spectacle should mollify the hardened hearts of the people in his behalf, "they cried out" in a tumultuous manner, "saying: Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: "Take you him and crucify him; for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he

made himself the Son of God. When Pilate heard these words, he was more afraid," lest perhaps he should be of the progeny of the gods as the Romans fancied their heroes to be; for considering the miracles he had wrought, his indifference for life, his invincible patience in sufferings, he might thence be induced to conclude, that there was in Jesus some divine quality, which his enemies now wrongfully sought to lay to his charge as a crime of the greatest magnitude. "And he entered into the hall again, and said to Jesus: Whence art thou?" that is, of what race, human or divine? "But Jesus gave him no answer," because the question was irrelevant to the accusation brought against him. "Pilate therefore saith to him: Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and that I have power to release thee? Jesus answered: Thou wouldst not have any power at all against me, unless it were given thee from above: therefore he who delivered me to thee, hath the greater sin;" thus gently insinuating that Providence had made use of the vices and passions of men to deliver him up into his hands, and though he were more excusable than they on account of his ignorance, yet that he must be accountable for any abuse of his power. "From thenceforth Pilate" gave still more evident marks that he "sought to release him: but the Jews," fully sensible of the weak side of the prætor, "cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; for every one that maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." Upon hearing this, the unhappy judge gave way, as if thunderstruck at these fatal words. At once the avowed innocence of Jesus, his own regard for justice, and every other consideration vanished from before his eyes. His thoughts were engrossed with the dread of the emperor Tiberius, the most jealous of men, and of the malice of the Jews, who would not fail to accuse him before that prince of having spared the life of one who had declared himself the King of the Jews.

Pilate, however, under this agitation and perplexity of mind, went so far as to make one more effort to save the life of Jesus, which yet proved equally unsuccessful with the former. For, "when he had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth and sat down in the judgment seat, in the place that is called *Lithostrotos*, and in Hebrew Gabbatha:* and it was the day of preparation for the Passover, about the sixth hour," or between eleven and twelve o'clock at noon; "And he saith to the Jews," in order to awaken in them sentiments of humanity and of love towards their Messiah, then suffering before their eyes in the most pitiable state: "Behold your king" in the outward garb of the most forlorn and miserable of human beings! Where then is your love for him? Where your compassion for the misery of your fellow creature? "But they still cried out: Away with him, away with him, crucify him." We are struck with such unfeeling, barbarous usage: but

* Gabbatha, in the Syriac, for that is the language which was then commonly spoken, and which the writers of the New Testament call *Hebrew*, signifies an *elevation*, and therefore the place where Pilate had his tribunal erected, was probably a terrace, a gallery, or balcony, belonging to his palace, and paved with stone or marble, as the word *lithostrotos* imports.

let us ever bear in mind, that it was our sins that cried out still more loudly than the Jews, *crucify him, crucify him,* since they were, in fact, the true cause of all his sufferings.

"Pilate saith to" these hard-hearted "Jews: Shall I" be guilty of so black a parricide, as to "crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar," thus renouncing their Messiah, notwithstanding all the wonderful proofs which he had given them of his mission. "And Pilate, seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water, washed his hands* before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it:" as if this vain ceremony and verbal declaration were sufficient to clear him, in the sight of the great and just Judge, from the guilt of concurring to the death of the innocent Jesus. "And all the people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children." Thus drawing down both upon themselves and their whole nation a malediction, the dreadful effect of which has been, is still, and will be visible to the whole earth, until they shall adore as their God him whom they crucified as the enemy of God.

"So Pilate," at length tired out, "and willing to satisfy the people, gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released to them" their precious choice, "Barabbas, who for murder and sedition had been cast into prison, whom they had desired: but Jesus he delivered up to their will to be crucified;" yet he did not allow a repetition of the scourging which was always inflicted previously to the execution of a criminal, because Jesus had already undergone the severity of this punishment, executed upon him in the most cruel manner.

Thus ended all the resistance of Pilate, who, instead of bearing in mind that he held in his hands the power of Cæsar to support justice and innocence now basely sacrificed them both to his his own temporal advantage. To defend the innocent Jesus against his declared enemies, he ought to have run every risk of the displeasure of Tiberias, and of the rage of the Jewish people, trusting in God for his protection in so good and glorious a cause; since it can never be lawful to do an unjust action, though with the view of procuring the greatest good, or of preventing the greatest evils. However, his repeated endeavors to rescue Jesus were not entirely useless; for though they did not serve to exculpate Pilate in the sight of God, they evinced at least the innocence of Jesus, and placed it in so clear a light, that even his subsequent condemnation rendered it the more conspicuous. It is impossible, indeed, that innocence can ever appear in stronger colors, than when the party accused is declared innocent, even by the very judge who condemns him to death.

* *This washing of hands*, with a design to denote innocence, was common both to Jews and Gentiles, because the element of water naturally signifies purity and cleanness. See Ps. xxvii. 6. Virgil's Æneid, ii. 718.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS.* MATT. XXVII. 32 TO 56. MARK XV. 20 TO 41. LUKE XXIII. 26 TO 49. JOHN XIX. 17 TO 30.

WE have now to consider the sequel of this doleful scene under the two following heads: 1. The sufferings which Jesus underwent on his crucifixion: 2. The ignominies which accompanied his sufferings. The former consisted in carrying his cross, and in being nailed to it; the latter in his being crucified in a state of nakedness and dereliction; exposed to the insulting scoffs of all descriptions of persons, viz. Jews, Gentiles, the chief priests, the thieves, and a numerous band of soldiers.

"And they took Jesus, and after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him," either with a view to make Jesus more distinguishable in his usual dress, or to establish more indisputably the claim they had to them on his being put to death. "And bearing his own cross," that is, the transverse portion of it, as was the custom for men condemned to be crucified, "he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, (that is, of skulls, perhaps, says St. Jerom, from the skulls of persons executed and buried there,) but in Hebrew, Golgotha." Several ancient writers, as Tertullian, Origen, St. Athanasius, etc., affirm that Adam was buried there: some also say, that a part of this mountain called Moria, was the place where Abraham was about to sacrifice his son Isaac, the type of our Lord. "And as they where leading" Jesus to execution, his strength failed him, and they were obliged to ease him of his heavy load. "They found a man of Cyrene," in Lybia, "named Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus," afterwards two illustrious Christians, "coming out of the country,* Him they forced to take up his cross; and they laid" it "upon him to carry after Jesus:" by which it was signified to all his followers, that he was not to bear his cross alone, but that they also must bear it after him without repining or complaint. The chief priests and scribes made it a point of duty to give their personal attendance during the whole of this scene, judging it proper and political on their part to see Jesus expire upon the cross, lest perhaps the Roman governor, whom they considered as greatly inclined to favor him, should deceive them by substituting some other individual in his stead. "And there followed him" likewise" a great crowd of people and of wo-

* In this chapter we have been obliged to transpose the texts of St, Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, because they relate the same thing in a different order. The narration of St. John has been followed, because it appears the most natural.

* Many of the moderns will have it that he was a Jew, from Cyrene in Lybia, and that being a known friend to Jesus, he was compelled by the soldiers to carry his cross, at the instigation of the Jews. Painters represent him as bearing only the hind part of the cross, and Jesus the fore part; but according to the fathers, he bore the whole of it to Mount Calvary.

men, who bewailed and lamented for him" amidst so many stony-hearted Jews, that thirsted only after his blood. Among these were probably those Galilean women, who had formerly waited on and ministered to him, and his beloved Mary and Martha, whose great affection had doubtless overcome their fears on this occasion to follow their Lord in this his last journey. "And Jesus turning towards them," and knowing the numberless woes impending over his devoted country, "said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep over yourselves and over your children. For behold, the day shall come in which it shall be said: Happy they that are barren, and the wombs that bare not, and the breasts that have not given suck.* Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us; and to the hills, Cover us.† For if they do these things in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?" that is, if I, who am innocent, and who suffer for the expiation of others' sins, am thus treated, what may impenitent sinners themselves expect to suffer, when they shall be punished according to the rigor of divine justice? "And with him were led also two other malefactors to be put to death. And they bring Jesus into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is the place of Calvary," or of skulls, which was out of Jerusalem to the north-west,* to show that Jesus Christ was sacrificed for the whole world, and not for the Jews only. "And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh" or gall, thus changing a drink which common pity had provided for the consolation and refreshment of condemned persons, into a nauseous bitterness not to be endured; "and when he had tasted he would not drink," being determined to submit to the death of the cross without any alleviation of its pains, and without shrinking from any part of its horrors.† "There they crucified him, and with him two others, robbers, one on the right, and the other on the left, and Jesus in the midst," as if he had been the greatest malefactor of the three. "And" thus "the scripture was fulfilled which saith: And with the wicked he was reputed. And Jesus said: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" thus teaching us, by his example, to love our greatest enemies, and to do good to them that hate and persecute us. "Pilate wrote also an inscription," in great legible characters, according to the custom of the Romans, "and put it upon the cross" of Jesus, "over his head," denoting his name, his country,

* This they undoubtedly had occasion to think at the siege of Jerusalem, and during the war against the Romans not only on account of the loss of their children, and the sale of such as were under seventeen for bond-slaves, but chiefly on account of that famine in Jerusalem, which forced Mary, the daughter of Eleazer, a woman of some figure and quality, to eat her own sucking child: upon which, says Josephus, "the dread of famine made men weary of their lives, and the living envied the dead that were taken away before the extremity came to this height." De Bello Jud. lib. 7, c. 8.

† A proverbial expression to denote the utter despair when they see unavoidable calamities coming upon them. See the prophet Osee, x. 8. Accordingly, Josephus relates of the Jews, that after the taking of Jerusalem, many of them hid themselves in vaults and sepulchres, and there perished rather than surrender to the Romans. Ibid.

* Mount Calvary at present makes a part of poor modern Jerusalem.

† According to St. Austin, Venerable Bede, and others, St. Matt. xxvii. 27, and St. Mark xv. 23, speak of the same beverage, so that what the former calls wine mingled with *gall*, the latter expresses by wine mingled with *myrrh*; it being called *gall* from its bitterness. In the Protestant version, for *wine* we read *vinegar*, which is agreeable to the original Greek copies; but other Greek copies, which St. Jerom and St. Hilary follow, have wine as we read in the Vulgate.

and the cause for which he suffered. "And it was written, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews;* it being the *divine pleasure* that, without any of their false glosses, it should now be published to their shame who he was, and how unjustly betrayed by them, viz. the only Son of the king of heaven, Jesus their Messiah, sent with the gospel of everlasting happiness and peace, to reign over them for ever; and by them thus deserted, rejected, and crucified. "This inscription many of the Jews read; because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city," and distant only about 250 paces: "and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin," that in the great concourse of strangers from all parts to the Paschal solemnity, it might be understood by them all. "The chief priests, therefore, of the Jews," resenting this title, which in plain terms affirmed Jesus to be their king, and consequently themselves to be his betrayers and crucifiers, "said to Pilate: Write not the King of the Jews, but that he said, I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered" somewhat sullenly: "What I have written, I have written," and so it must stand. He appears purposely to have couched the inscription in these terms, for the following reasons: 1. Having now by the death of Jesus no further cause to dread the jealousy of Tiberias, he was pleased with an opportunity of restoring to him that honor of which he had so unjustly deprived him, by sanctioning the high title which his followers had given to him. 2. Piqued at the violence with which the Jews had extorted from him the condemnation of Jesus, he felt some degree of satisfaction in fixing upon the whole Jewish nation a mark of shame and infamy, since by this indelible monument they were described as having crucified their own king. The third reason, one beyond the depth of Pilate's understanding, was, that according to the prophecies, the King of the Jews was to suffer death on a cross, and that therefore the true cause, on the part of God, why Jesus was nailed to a cross, was precisely because he was really the King of the Jews. Hence Almighty God, who had suggested to the mind of Pilate the very terms of this descriptive title, allowed him not to consent to its being altered.

"When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments, of which they made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat; casting lots upon them, what every man should take. Now the coat was without seam, woven all over," and therefore they considered that it could not be divided without rendering it useless.* "They said therefore one to another: Let us not cut it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They parted my garments among them: and upon my vesture they have cast lots.† And the soldiers indeed did these things, and then "sat down" on

* Our Saviour's garments, we may imagine, were such as the meaner people of Gallilee and his disciples were: viz. an outer loose garment, having at the bottom four skirts. See Deut. xxii. 12, and a coat closer to his body, which it appears was knitted all in one piece, as waistcoats frequently are. Perhaps this latter, agreeably to an ancient tradition, might have been the work of his poor mother, the Blessed Virgin, for securing him the more effectually against the cold, because he often lodged abroad at nights, not having where to lay his head. See Euthymius, in Evang. Matt. tom. 19, Bib Patrum.

† Psalm xxi.

the ground "and watched him," either to prevent any attempt for rescuing Jesus from the cross, or perhaps to hinder the Jews from tearing away the inscription or title which had been affixed to it. The holy fathers observe, that as God would not suffer the enemies of Christ to break a bone of him, so neither would he permit them to tear his seamless coat: this they consider as a type of his Church, which can never admit of division by schism and therefore such as offer to tear its unity, cease to be members of it, as St. Austin observes.

"And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Observe their blindness thus to reproach him with that very crime which they themselves were actually perpetrating against his person. "Now the people stood looking on, and the rulers with them: in like manner also the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said one to another: He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God: let Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe: he trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he is pleased with him; for he said: I am the Son of God. And the soldiers also made sport with him, coming and offering him vinegar; and saying: If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. And the self-same thing the thieves also that were crucified* with him reproached him. And one of these robbers blasphemed him, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." The blasphemy consisted either in his concluding that he was not the Christ, from the low state to which he saw him now reduced, or rather in taxing him if he were really the Christ or the Messiah, and the Son of God, with an extreme folly and weakness of mind, to allow himself to be thus fastened to the cross. "But the other," on the right hand of Christ,† whose heart God had touched, amid so many blasphemies, to glorify and confess our Lord, "answering, rebuked him, and said: Neither dost thou fear God" any more than the others, blaspheming, in a similar manner, him whom they blaspheme: but "seeing thou art under the same condemnatiou" as he is, thou oughtest therefore to be the more compassionate to his sufferings, as thou must be sensible of the grievousness of thy own. Moreover, in this similarity of punishment, there exists an infinite difference betwixt the cause of his sufferings and ours. "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward

* Some with the view of distinguishing Christ's sufferings from those of the two thieves, pretend that the latter were fastened to the cross with cords and not with nails; but this is false, for the same term is made use of in the gospel; and when the three crosses were found, there was need of a miracle to distinguish that which belonged to Jesus, which would not have been the case in the above supposition.

† See St. Hilary, chap. 33, in St. Matthew; Geoffridus Vindocinensis, ser. 10; St. Augustin in Joan. trac. 31; and St. Leo the Great, ser. 53. c. 1. He was converted while hanging on the cross, and before he witnessed the prodigies which took place at Christ's death: St. Leo, ser. 51 Whether he first joined in upbraiding Christ *with his companion*, is a question among interpreters and the holy fathers according to A. Lapide, most of the Latin fathers hold the negative.

of our deeds: but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus," as it were to atone for the blasphemies of his companion: "Lord, remember me," the companion of thy cross, and thy fellow-sufferer, "when thou shalt come into thy kingdom."

These words display, first, a consummate charity and love of Jesus, together with an intrepid zeal, in maintaining his cause at a time when his enemies were venting their rage against him, and when he was deserted even by his friends.*

2. A becoming liberty, with regard to his companion, whom he boldly rebuked for his blasphemies.

3. An humble and sincere acknowledgement of his own crimes, in the hearing of all present.

4. A voluntary acceptance of his own sufferings and of his approaching death in a spirit of penance, which in effect changed the punishment of his crimes into a expiatory sacrifice.

5. A firm hope of pardon, of which he at the same time acknowledged himself undeserving.

6. An implicit belief as well of the innocence as of the divinity of Jesus, at a time when the world was treating him as the greatest of malefactors.

7. A public avowal of his expectation of Christ's future kingdom, at a time when, as a worm of the earth, he was trodden under foot by mankind. "And Jesus," in reward of this his heroic profession of faith, "said to him, Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise;" that is, in a place of rest and happiness with the souls of the just: hereby granting him a full discharge of all his sins, both as to their guilt and punishment, and ensuring to him, immediately after death, the happy society of the saints, whose limbo was now made a paradise, by our Lord's going there. Thus did Jesus from his cross, as from his tribunal, begin to act the part of a just judge towards these two criminals, by absolving the one on account of his faith and repentance,* and by condemning the other for his blasphemy and impenitence.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother," who had followed him from Jerusalem, experiencing now the truth of what Simeon had foretold viz. that a sword of grief should pierce her heart. Yet in her extreme affliction she gave proof of a courage truly worthy of the mother of a man-God, being fearless of danger amid the insults of a tumultuous mob. There were present likewise "her sister Mary," spouse "of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother, and the disciple" John "standing by whom he loved, he saith to his mother, compassionating her sorrow: "Woman, behold thy son." Oh! what an exchange, cries out St. Bernard, John is substituted in the place of Jesus, the servant in the place of his Lord, the disciple in the place of his Master, the son of Zebe-

* * The good thief is called a martyr by St. Jerom, Ep. 13; by St. Hilary, l. 10, de Trinitate; by St. Austin, l. 1, de Anima, cap. 9; but not in the strict sense of the word, because he did not die for the name of Christ, but for his own past crimes. "Two things are requisite for martyrdom," says St. Bonaven, in 4 sent. dist. 4 part. 2, "a *just will*, and a *just cause*," etc. Some call him *Dimas*, or *Dismis*, but this name does not occur in the martyrology.

* According to St. Leo, ser. 51, chap. i., this thief had been a highwayman, and St. Gregory the Great adds, 1 8. Moralium, that he had slain his brother.



The Women of Galilee.

Luke XXIII 55. 56.

dee in the place of the Son of God. "After that he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that time the disciple took her to his own" home, and treated her with all that dutiful attention which is due from a son to his mother. This mutual exchange however disproportioned in regard of Mary, was extremely honorable to John, and a well-deserved reward of his courage and fidelity. For when all his brethren fled away, or hid themselves through fear, he alone seems to have had the courage to show himself near the cross with the blessed mother of Jesus, and to have remained there till he saw him give up the ghost. We may remark on this occasion, that Christ sets an example to all dutiful children, how attentive they ought to be to honor and provide for their parents in all their necessities.

"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth, till the ninth hour," that is, from mid-day till three o'clock. "And the sun," sympathizing as it were with its Lord, and covering its face at such a horrid parricide, "was darkened,"* at a time when incapable of any natural eclipse, the moon being now at the full, and at its greatest distance: "and about the ninth hour," or three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* This is the beginning of the 21st Psalm, and Jesus, by speaking these words aloud, would show to the world that the whole psalm is prophetic of him, which will indeed appear sufficiently manifest, if we consider how exactly he verified every part of it by his actions and sufferings. "And some of them that stood there, and heard these words, said: This man calleth for Elias," judging so from the similitude of the word Eloi; for they did not understand Hebrew.

"Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture may be fulfilled, he saith I thirst," which was the natural effect of the almost entire effusion of his sacred blood, and of the extreme violence of his torture: but this thirst was likewise mysterious, and denoted the vehement thirst which he had for

* Whether this darkness was confined to the land of Judea, or extended itself much further, even over the whole hemisphere where it happened, is a question wherein the ancients and moderns are not so well agreed. Origen, Maldonatus, and some others, are of the former opinion: but the majority differ from them, and for this they quote the positive declaration of the evangelists, affirming that this darkness extended itself over all the earth; they likewise quote the authority of Thallus and Phlegon, the famous astronomer under the emperor Trajan, who says that in the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad, which is supposed to be that of the death of Christ, there was a total eclipse of the sun, insomuch that at noon day the stars were plainly to be seen.

Thallus and Phlegon are cited by Eusebius. This event was likewise recorded in the archives of the Roman empire, as appears from the apology of Tertullian, as likewise in the journals of the Chinese. See Lettres Edifantes.

It is to be observed, that in common eclipses the sun's *total* darkness can continue but twelve or fifteen minutes at most, whereas this is recorded to have lasted no less than three full hours. Matt. xxvii. 45. According to St. Suidas, Dionysius the Areopagite, who was then at Heliopolis in Egypt, observing this surprising phenomenon, declared to his friend Apollophanus, "either that the Author of nature was suffering, or that the machine of the universe was dissolving and falling to ruin." Others assign him different expressions on this occasion. See Calmet's Dissertation on this subject; or Tillemont, note thirty-five, On the Life of Christ, p. 449. This outward darkness was very expressive of that spiritual darkness which then hung over the Jews, and still blinds them in so extraordinary a manner.

* As St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. 5, says that Christ offered prayers with a great cry and *tears*, hence we may conclude with St. Thomas, that he shed tears when hanging on the cross, not for himself, but for us who were to be benefitted by his sufferings. St. Chrysostom observes. Hom. 6. on St. Matt., that Christ wept on other occasions, John ix. 35; Luke xix. 41; that he was never known to laugh.

the salvation of souls. "Now there stood a vessel with vinegar, and immediately one of them running, took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed," which St. John calls a stalk of hyssop, "and gave him to drink," as a restorative to his faintness, or to revive his almost exhausted vital spirits; "saying, Stay, let us see if Elias come to take him down: and the others said" in like manner. "When Jesus therefore had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated," all the prophecies relating to my life and death are now fulfilled; and again crying with a loud voice," such as evinced to the world that he died through love towards mankind, and not through a failure of the powers of nature, "he said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:* and saying these words, and bowing down his head, he gave up the ghost."

"And behold," at the same moment, "the" inner "veil of the temple was rent in two places from the top even to the bottom,"* to show that all the former typical ceremonies of the Mosaical law were at an end, and that the road to heaven, the true sanctuary, which since the transgression of our forefather Adam had been shut, was now again open to mankind; "and the earth quaked,"† as if to express its horror of the crime committed in the crucifixion of its Lord and Master; "and the rocks were rent," as it were through grief at the horrid scene, particularly that of Mount Calvary, where our Lord suffered: the cleft of which, as travellers inform us, may be seen at this day. "This cleft," says Mr. Maundrell, "as to what now appears of it, is about a span wide at its upper part, and two deep; after which it closes, but it opens again below, and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. That this rent was made by the earthquake, there is only tradition to prove; but that it is not counterfeited by any art, the sense and reason of every one that sees it, may convince him. For the sides of it fit like two tallies to each other, and yet it runs

* We may here take notice of the seven last words or sentences which Christ spoke on the cross.

1. He prayed for his enemies and those that put him to death, Luke xxiii. 34, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

2. His mercy called the good thief: *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43.

3. As a model of filial piety he recommended his mother to his beloved disciple, and the same disciple to his mother: *Woman, behold thy son, behold thy mother*, John xix. 26.

4. To express his violent sufferings, he cried out with a loud voice: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*, Matt. xxvii. 46, which he uttered with a perfect confidence and assurance in the assistance of God, as appears from what he immediately adds, recommending his spirit into the hands of his Father.

The fifth sentence was, *I thirst*, to let us know the violent thirst of his exhausted body, and the spiritual thirst he felt for the salvation of souls.

The sixth sentence was, *It is consummated*, John xix. 30; that is, the work of mans's redemption, and all the prophecies and decrees of heaven concerning me, the Saviour of the world, are now accomplished.

The seventh and last sentence, as well as the fourth, proved his divinity; for with a *loud voice* he cried out: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46. By which we are taught with what earnestness we are to commend ourselves to our heavenly Father when brought to the last extremity of life.

* There were two veils in the temple, as Josephus informs us, lib. 5, de Bello Judaico, c. 5; the one before the *holy place*, the other before the *holy of holies*. The ancients are not agreed which of these was rent in two. It was the inward veil according to St. Leo, St. Cyril of Alex., which is confirmed by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, c. x.

† Some are of opinion that this was the same earthquake that happened in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and was the greatest that ever was known in the memory of man. Both Pliny and Macrobius make mention of it, and the latter informs that it destroyed no less than twelve cities in Asia. But Origen and others think that the present earthquake affected only the temple of Jerusalem and the parts specified in the sacred text, viz. the veil, the ground, the rocks, the tombs, etc. Nor does it seem improbable that this prodigy was shown particularly in this place, to foretell the destruction of the Jewish temple and its worship, on account of that people's strange incredulity and impiety in crucifying the *Lord of life*.

into such intricate windings as could not well be counterfeited by art, nor performed by any instrument." Mr. Shaw, who in his travels seems to have examined every thing with the eyes of a philosopher, assures us, that this aperture in the rock of Mount Calvary is a miracle which never fails to excite in the beholder an emotion of astonishment and religious awe. Mr. Millar, in his history of *the Propagation of Christianity*, makes mention of a Deist, a man of talent, and well skilled in mathematics, who, after a careful examination of this memorable cleft, was converted to Christianity. For the fissure, he observed, was directly contrary to that which takes place in ordinary earthquakes, not being according to the veins and weak parts of the rock. He therefore concluded that this was supernatural, and alone sufficient to prove the divine mission of Jesus Christ. "And the graves were opened," as it were to show that death was now destroyed by the death of Jesus, and that his death was now become the principle of life, in token of which "many bodies of saints that had slept arose,* and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing what was done," and that Jesus had given up the ghost, crying out in this manner, which was extremely different from that of persons crucified, whose voice and strength fail them by degrees through loss of blood, until at length they expire, as if swooning away; reflecting, I say, upon all these circumstances, he "glorified God, saying" to all present, "Truly this was a just man: indeed this man was the Son of God. And they that were with them watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were greatly afraid, saying: Indeed this man was the Son of God. And all the multitude of those who were present at this spectacle, the chief priests are not mentioned, and saw the things that happened, returned knocking their breasts" through sorrow and regret for the horrid deed in which they had concurred. "And all his acquaintance stood at a distance, and" so did "the women that had followed him from Galilee, beholding these things. Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee, who also when he was in Galilee followed him, ministering to him; and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem" accompanied him on this mournful occasion, though their names are not recorded in the gospel.

CHAPTER CXLIV.

THE SIDE OF JESUS IS OPENED WITH A SPEAR. HE IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHRE. MATT. XXVII. 57 TO 66. MARK XV. 42 TO 46. LUKE XXIII. 50. TO 55. JOHN XIX. 31. TO 42.

"THE Jews then, because it was the day of preparation, that the bodies

* It is well worthy of notice that they did not rise again till after Christ's resurrection, Christ being the first fruits of them that slept: 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. And as St. Paul styles our Saviour the *first-born from the dead*, Coloss. i. 18, *and the first-fruits of them that sleep*, 1 Cor. xv. 20, most commentators are of opinion, that though several tombs were opened as soon as our Saviour expired, yet none of the saints arose until he himself first returned from the grave. Origen. St. Jerom. Bede, etc.

might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath, for on account of the Passover, "that was a most solemn Sabbath-day, desired Pilate that their legs might be broken" in order to hasten their death, "that" afterwards "they might be taken away." They were in this actuated by the idea that the sanctity and joy of the day would be sullied and damped by the doleful sight of human bodies hanging upon the cross, which was strictly forbidden in Deut. xxi. 22, where it is enjoined that the bodies of executed criminals shall not remain all night on the cross, but shall be buried on the very day of their execution, before sunset. "The soldiers, therefore came; and they broke the legs of the first, and also of the other who was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs," as it would have been to no purpose. "But one of the soldiers"* wantonly "opened his" right "side† with a spear, and presently there came blood and water" in two distinct streams; for otherwise, by reason of the strong tincture of blood, the water could not have been discerned, if mingled with it. This circumstance we can view in no other light than as a miracle, it being certain, that in all dead bodies the blood speedily congeals or coagulates after death, neither is the humor nor liquid contained in the pericardium like to natural water, either in color or taste. These two circumstances of the water and blood may likewise be considered as mysterious; inasmuch as they vividly represent the two sacraments, left by our Lord to his Church, for the cleansing of sin, and the commemoration of his death. These are the sacrament of baptism, by which we are regenerated to the life of grace; and the sacrament of the eucharist, which affords nourishment suitable to that life which we receive in baptism. In this sense therefore we may say, that as Eve was formed out of Adam's side when lying asleep, so by the water and blood issuing from the side of Christ, lying in the sleep of death, was formed in these two sacraments, his Spouse, the Catholic Church; she is regenerated in the one by Christ's spirit, and nourished in the other with his grace; she is redeemed by the shedding of blood, and cleansed by the water of baptism.

Hence St. John, a spectator and diligent observer of all that passed, takes particular notice of this miracle, and establishes the truth of it by the testimony of his own eyes, and the most thorough conviction of its reality in these words: "And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true, that you also may believe." He further confirms it from the coincidence or agreement of this event with the prophecies which foretold that the executioners should pierce his sacred

* He was afterwards called Longinus, perhaps from *logche*, or lancea, that is, the *lance* with which he opened Christ's side, and being converted to faith, suffered martyrdom in Cappadocia. See Martyrologium Romanum Idilus Martii, and Bollandus. However, Baronius and Tillemont make but little account of his acts. Painters generally represent Longinus as on horseback, but most authors think he was a foot-soldier, because a spear, or short spike, was one part of the armor belonging to the Roman infantry.

† It was only Christ's right side that was opened with a spear, according to Bede, in le Regum Quæs. 12; St. Bernard, ser. 7, in Psal. Qui habitat; St. Bonav. in his Life of Christ, c. 80; Innocent III.; and St. Bridget, l. 7, of her Revelation; but Lucas Brugensis, a writer of the fourteenth century, pretends it was his left side, and Prudentius considered that both his sides were pierced through.



The Dead Christ.

body, but not break a bone. "For these were done," says St. John, "that the scripture might be fulfilled: *You shall not break a bone of him*,"* which was spoken indeed of the Paschal lamb, but which prefigured that the bones of Jesus, the true lamb of God, should not be broken upon the cross: and again, another scripture sayeth, *They shall look on him whom they have pierced*.†

"When evening was come, because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath, there came a certain rich man named Joseph, a noble counsellor, and a good and just man. The same had given no consent to the councils and proceedings of the Jews, he was of Arimathea, a city of Judea, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man," therefore, though heretofore too timorous in declaring for Christ, "went in boldly to Pilate, and, being a disciple of Jesus, but in private for fear of the Jews, begged the body of Jesus, desiring Pilate that he might take it away. But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead; for it not unfrequently happened, that persons crucified lived full two days upon the cross. "And sending for the centurion," from the fortress Antonio, "he asked him, if he were already dead; and when he had understood it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph," not refusing him a decent burial, whom he had always esteemed an innocent person. "And" therefore "he commanded that it should be delivered. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus." For the greater honor of our Lord's funeral "there came also Nicodemus, he that had come to Jesus by night at first," and who had likewise spoken in his defence in the council, "bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in a clean linen cloth. They took therefore the body, and bound it in linen cloths with spices, as it is the custom of the Jews to bury." In this office we may imagine these great persons were assisted by the blessed mother of our Lord, and St. John, who relates this more in detail than the other evangelists. "And there was in the place, where he was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new monument,* wherein no man yet had been laid. There, by reason of the day of preparation among the Jews," Joseph, attended by this small train of mourners, "laid it in his own new monument hard by, which he had hewed out of a rock. And he rolled a great stone† to the door of the monument," to prevent any violation of the place, or of the body, and likewise to secure the costly linen clothes

* Exod xii. 46. † Zachary xii. 10.

* The holy sepulchre remains to this day, and is continually visited by a great number of Christians, according to that prophecy of Isa. xi. 10: *And his sepulchre shall be glorious*. On the right side from the entrance, the sacred body of our Lord was placed with his head towards the west. See Mark xvi. 5. compared with John xx.

† According to the description of those that have seen it, it is a kind of small chamber, almost square within; the height of which, from top to bottom, is eight feet and an inch; its lenght six feet and an inch, and its breadth fifteen feet and ten inches. Its entrance or vestibule, which looks towards the east, is but four feet high, and two feet four inches wide. The place within, where our Lord's body was laid takes up a whole side of the cave. The stone which was laid to secure the door of the sepulchre is still remaining even to this day, and according to Mr. Maundrell, is two yards and a quarter long, one broad and one thick, : but the particular parts of it are not visible, being all incrusted over with white marble, except in five or six little places, where it is left bare, to receive the kisses and other devotions of pilgrims: Mark Luke's Voyage to *Asia Minor*, vol. 1, p. 12; and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.

and spices that had been bestowed upon it, "and" then "went his way. And that was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women that had come with him from Galilee, following after," viz. "Mary Magdalen and the other Mary," were "sitting over against the sepulchre," and when Joseph and Nicodemus came forth from it, previous to their rolling the great stone, they entered in, and "saw the monument, and how his body was laid. And returning, they prepared perfumes and ointments: and they rested on the Sabbath, according to the precept" of the law.

In the recital of these various circumstances we observe so many striking proofs of the death of Jesus, that it is placed beyond the possibility of a doubt and therefore we do not find that it was ever called in question by any of the unbelieving Jews. As to his resurrection, the proofs of it also begin to appear, 1. From the shape and structure of this monument: for it was so disposed by Divine Providence, that this should be hewn out of the solid rock, lest otherwise there should have been grounds for supposing the body of Jesus to have been stolen away, either by undermining the foundations, by perforating the walls, or by opening the roof, all which must have been humanly impossible in a place of this description. It was further so disposed by Divine Providence, that this monument should never have been used before, and therefore as the body of Christ was the first placed there, this circumstance precluded the possibility of any other body's being mistaken for his, as might have been pretended, in case other bodies had been entombed in the same monument.

The second proof of the resurrection of Jesus, arises from the extraordinary precautions which his declared enemies employed on this occasion. He had so repeatedly foretold to his disciples his future resurrection, and it had, in so many instances, been the subject of conversation, that the particulars of so interesting a prediction had at length reached the ears of his adversaries the high priests and Pharisees, and now recurred to their minds in the most striking manner, at a time when the disciples themselves had lost all recollection of them. Accordingly they resolved to lose no time in taking proper measures, "and the next day which followed the day of preparation the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first." This was the plea which the Pharisees held forth to Pilate for granting their request: but nothing, in fact, could be more frivolous. For what interest could the disciples have in establishing the glory and immortality of one, by whom they themselves would have been grossly deceived? What motive could induce persons of their description, of the lowest rank in society, without learning, credit, or support, to attempt, by a series of concerted falsehoods, to impose on their

countrymen, in behalf of a man publicly put to death, without the smallest prospect of deriving any advantage from such an imposture? On the contrary, as they had hitherto exposed themselves to the hatred of the whole nation upon his account, it was very natural, after being thus imposed upon themselves, that, instead of supporting his interest any longer, they should now give him up, and declare to the magistrates that he was an impostor,—a testimony which the whole synagogue would have received with general applause, and which would have gained the affection and esteem of the people; whereas, by publishing his resurrection they had nothing to look for but the most rigorous torments, persecutions, and death itself.

Wherefore the real motive which influenced the high priests on this occasion, was probably the apprehension lest this prediction of Christ's resurrection should actually be verified. The wonderful prodigies which took place at his death, and especially the opening of the graves, might very naturally appear as preludes to what he had so often foretold. It is true, they had no idea but of a temporary, passing resurrection, like to that of Lazarus, which they had witnessed: yet they judged that a possible event of this nature might be attended with the most serious consequences. Hence it is highly probable, that they gave on this occasion their own most express and particular injunctions to the soldiers, to put Jesus to death by all means, and to secure his body in the monument in case he should make any attempt to escape from their custody. For, as it is certain they formed a similar murderous design against the life of Lazarus, whose resurrection occasioned many to believe in Jesus, we may well suppose they would, in the present crisis, take similar steps against Jesus, with a view of totally annihilating a religion which he had begun to establish on the ruins of their own. Wherefore upon their petitioning for an armed force, "Pilate said to them: You have a guard: go, guard it, as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone" at the entrance of the monument with the public seal of the government, "and setting guards" at the vestibule, with proper instructions for their conduct. It was impossible for the Pharisees to adopt measures better calculated to establish the certainty of Jesus's resurrection beyond the reach of all suspicion, and in thus taking away from themselves and others every plea or pretext for calling this miraculous event in question, they afford the most reasonable and convincing grounds for all well-intentioned and unprejudiced minds, to place an implicit belief in the certainty of the fact. Thus by divine Providence were all the precautions of the high-priests turned against themselves, and served to render the resurrection of our Lord much more certain, since this very guard became the first witnesses of it, and announced it to the high-priests themselves; thus precluding every pretence, which otherwise they might have had of saying, that his body had been stolen away.

But whilst our blessed Lord's body was now at rest in the sepulchre, his glorious soul, which was never separa-

ted from the Deity, and was now attended on by multitudes of angels, descended into hell, and the lower parts of the earth, and of his kingdom, in order, as the triumphant conqueror over the powers of darkness, to announce comfort and deliverance to such imprisoned souls as were capable of the mercy and favours of his passion, according to that of the prophet Zachary ix. 11. *Thou also, by the blood of thy testament, hath sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.*

CHAPTER CXLV.

THE HISTORY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.* MATT. XXVIII. MARK. XVI. LUKE. XXIV. JOHN. XX.

"IN the night of the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week," which corresponds to our Sunday, "Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and of Salome, bought perfumes, that coming they might anoint Jesus;" for the Sabbath had obliged them to leave the embalming of his body imperfect on the Friday. "And very early in the morning," they set out, "it being yet dark," and "they come to the monument, the sun being now risen, bringing the perfumes they had prepared: and they said one to another: who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the monument?" They were not aware, it seems, of its being secured by the public seal, and guarded by a band of soldiers. They were on the road, when "behold there was a great earthquake," as there had been before at our Lord's death. "For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming rolled back the stone, and sat upon it." But, according to the holy Fathers, our Lord's glorious body had already passed through the monument, when yet shut up and sealed. "And the aspect" of the angel "was as lightning, and his ap-

* The history of Christ's resurrection is not a little obscure and perplexed, but may be explained in the following manner: Mary and the other women came to the sepulchre very early in the morning; but found that the stone was rolled away, and that the body of Jesus was gone. Upon this Magdalen runs back to Peter and John, and tells them what had happened; and they, to satisfy themselves of the truth of her report, hasten to the sepulchre, and not finding the body of Jesus, went away again. In the mean time the other women stay at the sepulchre, wondering at this strange event, whilst Magdalen in the garden is still seeking for the object of her affection. Then follows the vision of angels sitting upon the stone, and within the sepulchre, speaking to the women, and assuring them of the reality of Christ's resurrection. These angels had appeared likewise to Magdalen, as she wept, and looked into the sepulchre: but she took them for strangers, and left them, to withdraw a little from the sepulchre. Then it was she saw Jesus in the habit and form of a gardener, who made himself known to her, and sent her to announce to his afflicted Apostles the happy tidings of his resurrection. Jesus likewise appeared to the women as they were returning from the sepulchre, and bade them go and relate to his disciples the same joyful event. They did so, Mary confirming their testimony by her own; but they rejected both the one and the other as a dream and the effect of their weak imagination. This seems to be the right order, and the perplexity arises from interpreters not having sufficiently distinguished the different appearances of the angels, and from their not considering Magdalen apart from the rest of the other women.

St. Matthew, xxvii. 53, informs us, that at Christ's resurrection many bodies of saints arose, and coming out of the tombs appeared to many in the city. It is a question with the learned, whether these bodies became now immortal, or died again and returned to corruption. St. Thomas, 3 P. Q. 53. Ar. 3, after weighing the reasons on both sides, thinks it far more probable that they slept again in their graves, waiting the general resurrection. St. Chrysostom, Hom. 40. in 1 ad Cor., Theodoret and St. Austin, are of the same opinion, as likewise Calmet in his Dissertation on this subject.



parel" white "as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as if the had been dead." However the angel spared the lives of the soldiers, in order that they might vouch for the truth of what they had seen. In fact, their death would have given the Jews a specious pretext for asserting, that the disciples of Jesus had surprised the guards whilst asleeb, and after having massacred them in that defenceless state, had stolen away the body without opposition. In the mean time the women* were approaching, "and looking saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great." To them, however, the angel who sat thereon was perfectly invisible: "and entering into the sepulchre, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. Mary Magdalen ran therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple" John, "whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple," being younger, did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen clothes lying" decently wrapped up, "but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths" the only prey a robber would have looked after, "lying, and the napkin, that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths but apart, wrapt up into one place;' that is, folded up as it had been when upon our Lord's head. "Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw" that Jesus was not there, "and" so "believed," as Magdalen had conjectured, that his body had been taken away. "For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead. These disciples therefore went away again to their home," Peter "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre: and she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid," as if paying a particular reverence to the very place where his sacred body had been deposited. "They say to her: woman, why weepest thou? She" taking them for strangers, "saith to them: because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. When she had said this, she turned herself back," and went into the other parts of the garden, there to extend her eager researches, whilst the other women remained near to the monument. "But" Jesus "being risen early,* the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils, and she saw Jesus

* It does not appear, as Maldonatus observes, that the Blessed Virgin was one of them, though St. Greg. of Nyssa supposes that she was.

* The holy fathers are not agreed as to the precise hour of Christ's resurrection; some thinking that it was the hour after midnight, as St. Greg. of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Euthymius, whilst others, with greater probability, say it was later, and early in the morning: St. Cyprian, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Austin, St. Leo. St. Thomas, etc.

standing: and" yet "knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him," under the idea that he might have thrown out the body of one executed as a public criminal: "Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Upon his making no reply, she turned away from him, as she had done from the two angels. "Jesus," overcome as it were with tenderness, "saith to her: Mary. She turning," and ravished with joy, "saith to him: Rabboni, which is to say Master," is it you my dear Lord? and then probably fell prostrate to adore him, and kiss his feet. "Jesus saith to her: touch me not," that is, thou needest not hang about me at present in this earnest manner, as if thou wert never to see me more: "for I have not yet ascended to my Father," and so thou wilt have time enough to testify thy love for me: "but go to my brethren," for so he now styles his disciples, "and say to them: I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;" thus banishing from their minds the conceit of any temporal sceptre, and raising them to a celestial throne above. "Mary Magdalen cometh, and telleth the disciples that had been with him," and "were" now "mourning and weeping: I have seen the Lord,* and these things he said to me. And they hearing that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe," tacitly accusing her of taking a phantom for a reality.

"And it came to pass as" the other women, who had re-entered into the vestibule of the monument, "were astonished in their mind at this, behold two men stood by them in shining apparel, and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the ground," the angels "said to them: why seek you him who is living among the dead? He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Remember how he spoke to you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying: that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid; and going quickly, tell his disciples, and" especially "Peter,* that he is risen: and behold he goeth before you into Galilee, There you shall see him, as he told you. Behold I have foretold it to you." This injunction comprised all the disciples, who being then more than five hundred in number, could not have assembled in Judea, almost under the eyes of the chief priests, without giving umbrage to Pilate, who would not fail to consider so numerous a concourse as a proof of the existence of some dangerous plot against the established government. With a view therefore to the safety of

* We may observe with the holy fathers, that Christ first appears to women after his resurrection, thus honoring that sex which had been disgraced by the serpent's treachery. As man had fallen by the female sex; and as a virgin brought forth Christ, so a woman was the first to announce his resurrection. Although the Scripture be silent as to the Blessed Virgin, yet it is piously believed that she was the first to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection. See St. Ambrose, l. de Virginitate, l. ul. c. 3., the Ab. Rupert, Maldonatus, Suarez, etc. However, the learned Estius is of a different opinion, on account of the express testimony of St. Mark, chap. xvi. 9.

* The reason why they are ordered to announce Christ's resurrection to Peter in particular, is because he was the chief of the Apostles. Petrum abaliis discipulis ut præcipuum segregat, ac ob exellentiam nominat illum præ aliis. Theophilactus.



Christ appearing to Mary

his disciples, Jesus was pleased to appoint Galilee as the place of giving them a personal meeting. "And they called to mind his words. And they went quickly out of the monument with fear and great joy, running to tell his disciples, and they said nothing to any man" in the way; "for they were afraid.

"And behold Jesus met them, saying: hail, and they came near, and took hold of his feet, and adored him" with the most profound reverence. "Then Jesus saith to them: be not afraid. Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see me. And being returned from the monument, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest" of the disciples. "Now it was Mary Magdalen and Joanna," who was wife to Chusa, Herod's steward, "and Mary" the mother "of James, and the others, who were with them, that told these things to the Apostles, and these words seemed to them as an idle fancy, and they did not believe them."

Although the testimony here given by these pious women, might have been excepted against by the Jews, on account of their sex, which is usually taxed with credulity and weakness of mind, as also on account of their known affection and attachment to Jesus, yet it was entitled to belief on the part of the Apostles. With these the objection of sex ought to have had no weight, from the circumstance of the witnesses being numerous; who therefore could not all be deceived by an illusion. Besides, the parties were unanimous in the recital of the circumstances, which unanimity could not possibly have happened, were it not founded in truth. As a further argument in their favour, they were persons of an approved judgment and true virtue, greatly above the generality of their sex. This should have placed them even above the suspicion of having feigned a fabulous recital so circumstantial in all its parts. With regard to their known attachment and affection to Jesus, this, with the Apostles, who were no less attached to him ought to have been no objection against the credibility of their evidence. However, the indifferent, or rather the harsh reception which their deposition met with from the Apostles, ultimately vouched in favour of the truth. For in proportion as the Apostles were backward in surrendering their belief, on the strength of the evidence in question, in an equal degree were they decided and confirmed in opinion afterwards, when being ultimately convinced of the resurrection of Jesus, they boldly, and without fear, announced it to the Jews and to all nations of the earth, even at the hazard of their lives.

"When" the women "were gone, behold some of the guards," who had probably retired to some place for a while to consult what to say, and how to act on the occasion, "came into the city, and related to the chief priests all that had happened. And they being assembled with the elders, having consulted together, gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying: do you give out, that his disciples came in the night, and stole him away, while we were asleep. And if this be heard by the governor, we will pacify him, and

make you secure," for it was no less than death for a soldier to allow himself to be overcome by sleep when on guard. "So they having taken the money, did as they were instructed, and this report has been spread abroad," and still prevails "among the Jews, even until this day." But what can be more inconsistent than such a story, or more improbable in all its circumstances?

For, 1. If the guards were asleep, what could they see in that state? if they could see nothing, what could they vouch for? 2. Through what aperture could the disciples steal away the sacred body of Jesus? To the monument no other access could be had but through the door, which was guarded by the soldiers: in every other direction it was an impenetrable rock: how could they convey it away through the door, without awakening the soldiers, by the unavoidable noise which they must have occasioned, as well by removing the immense stone, as by carrying off the body? 3. How extremely improbable is it that the disciples, who were, at that very time, so cowardly and timorous, should attempt an undertaking of this kind, to their own certain ruin if detected, and without hopes of advantage if it could have succeeded? Again, did the poor disciples conduct themselves as authors of such a plot would certainly have done? Artless in their words and actions, they took no precautions whatever. As persons conscious of no fraud or guile, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more, after the report of their having stolen their Master's body was spread over the city; and, in about a month after, returned thither again, boldly asserting to the face of their powerful enemies, that *God had raised from the dead* that same *Jesus whom they had crucified.* The learned doctors and priests of the Jews, the jealous guardians of their church and state, heard this without laying to their charge the theft of their Master's body, which they would certainly have done if they had believed it true. This account of Christ's resurrection is indeed given by the Apostles and disciples, but it is contradicted by none; it is confirmed by miracles acknowledged both by Jews and Pagans, and by the progress which Christianity made at that time in Jerusalem; which alone is a sufficient demonstration, that no proof of any cheat was, or could be produced. All possibility of an imposture is farther banished by the sincerity and sanctity of the Apostles and disciples, which appear in their writings and in their whole conduct; also by the miraculous change wrought in them by the Holy Ghost, by which they, who were before so timorous, "gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ with the greatest courage;" confirming this testimony during their whole lives, amidst all threats, dangers, and hardships, and sealing it, at their deaths with their blood. Could one, much more could so many witnesses have all maintained this point with so much constancy, and even with the loss of their lives, had it been a known cheat? Especially if we consider that riches and honors would have been their certain recompense, had they made known to the Pharisees an imposture of this kind.

CHAPTER CXLVI.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH APPARITION OF JESUS.* MARK. XVI. 12 TO 13. LUKE. XXIV. 13 TO 34.

"AFTER that" Jesus "showed himself in another shape to two of them walking the same day to a town called Emmaus,† which was sixty furlongs," that is, about two miles "from Jerusalem" to the west. "And they were talking together of all these things that had happened" in regard to Jesus. "And it came to pass, as they were talking and reasoning together, Jesus himself coming up, went along with them. But their eyes were hindered," by a divine power, "that they should not know him. And he said to them: what are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleophas," and who was the reputed uncle of Christ, being St. Joseph's brother, and father of St. Simeon, St. James the Less, St. Jude and Joseph or Joses, "answering said to him: art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? And he said to them: what things? And they said, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in work and word, before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who should have redeemed Israel," as he promised, and as his miracles gave room to conclude. And now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done," and there is no appearance of him. "Moreover, some women of our company have terrified us, who, before it was light, were at the monument, and not finding his body, came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it as the women had said; but him they found not."

After having patiently listened to the two disciples, who had in this manner accounted for their incredulity concerning his resurrection, Jesus, "then said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken.* Ought not Christ," according to the Scriptures, "to have suffered these

* The next apparition of our Lord was to St. Peter; but though it happened before that made to the disciples going to Emmaus, yet they are so connected together in the narration of St. Luke, that they could not be placed separately in their proper order, as will appear from the context.

† A small town since called Nicopolis. The house of Cleophas was afterwards consecrated into a church by St. Paula, as we learn from St. Jerom, Ep. 27. c. 3.

* By this we learn the irresistible proof which prophecy gives to the truth of Christianity. These prophecies were written many ages before, at different times, by different persons, who could have no correspondence with one another. Some describing the person of the Messiah, some the very miracles he should work (Isaiah xxxv. 5.); others the evil treatment he should meet with; others his death, etc.; others the glories of his kingdom. So that no imposter could possibly tell what part to act if he had a mind. He must not only have laid down his life, but he must have risen from the dead.

things and so to enter into his glory?* And beginning from Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning him," viz. how all the legal sacrifices were only types of the oblation of the Messiah, and of the expiation of sin by his blood. He probably brought to their recollection Abraham offering his son Isaac as a representation of the only Son of God being offered up by his eternal Father, besides many other types of him, as the Paschal lamb, the brazen serpent which Moses raised up in the desert, that all who looked with faith upon it might be healed ; Jonas lying three days in the whale's belly, and afterwards cast on shore. To these he might add the descriptions of his passion to be found in Isaiah and the 21st Psalm, and likewise in other places; for, in fact, the whole history and all the prophecies of the Old Testament chiefly prefigured and represented the great mystery of man's redemption, as effected by the labors and sufferings of the Son of God. While Christ was thus instructing them, "they drew near to the town whither they were going: and he made a show to go further," and would certainly have done so, had they not hindered him by their affectionate importunity. "But they constrained him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent, and he went in with them. And it came to pass, while he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed and broke and gave it to them;" this many of the ancients understand of the blessed eucharist,* which he distributed to them under one kind alone. "And their eyes were opened," probably by a virtue attached to these sacred mysteries, "and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other: Was not our heart burning within us while he was speaking to us in the way, and opened to us the scriptures?"

By his thus instantly disappearing, they concluded it to be his intention that they should go and communicate the happy tidings of his resurrection to his disconsolate brethren: "and rising up the same hour, they returned back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven† gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon;" but neither the time nor the particulars of this appearance to Peter are recorded by the evangelists. However, the apostles, as Mr. West observes,‡ seem to have laid a greater stress upon it than upon all those related by the women. Cleophas and his companion then related their story, "and they told what things were done in the way, and how they knew him in the breaking of bread." But "neither did they" still "give credit

* This being the way to salvation to the whole Church, the members, as well as the head, must suffer. In vain would men find out an easier way to heaven; no cross—no crown.

* Estius, Jansenius, and Calmet are of a different opinion. Bellarm and Nat. Alexander leave the question undecided.

† It is thus the evangelists style the apostolic college subsequent to the death of Jesus, although Thomas was not present on the occasion.

‡ "Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ," by Gilbert West, p. 118. Euthymius had made the same remark long before. Comparing the testimony of the women and that of St. Peter, he says: Sane his non est habita fides. Petro vero tanquam *summo ac principi* cæterorum creditum est.

to them," notwithstanding this accumulated evidence of Christ's resurrection; which we are only to understand of some of the disciples, who, from our Lord's presently vanishing from the women, from St. Peter, and lastly, from these two at Emmaus, concluded that it was only some spirit appearing in his likeness. The same idea they seem also to have had, when our Lord appeared to themselves.*

From the circumstances of this history, we may gather how agreeable to Christ are the conversations of his followers on pious and religious subjects. No subject is so worthy of a Christian's thoughts, as what God has done and suffered for us; and if we entertain a due sense of our Redeemer's love, we shall not be backward to express our gratitude; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh

CHAPTER CXLVII.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH APPARITIONS OF JESUS TO THE ELEVEN. MARK XVI. 14. LUKE XXIV. 36 TO 43. JOHN XX. 19 TO 31.

THE next proof of the resurrection of Jesus arises from his appearing to the apostles assembled together. Here we find the necessary conditions for pronouncing it decisive. 1. We find the apostles previously diffident and incredulous even to an unaccountable degree. 2. The fact of Jesus's appearing to the apostles is established with the utmost certainty of evidence. 3. These apostles now become so thoroughly convinced of the resurrection, that they announce it to the whole world, and afterwards seal their testimony with their blood. As the testimony of enemies is of great weight, so is likewise the conviction of persons who declare their assent to a certain fact against which they have hitherto been decidedly prepossessed. We must therefore lay no small stress on the testimony of the apostles in favor of Christ's resurrection, since they were previously so incredulous as to resist every argument offered in its support. Under this unbelieving disposition of mind, their divine Master brought them, by slow degrees, and as it were step by step, to acknowledge the truth of this wonderful event. The first information respecting it was conveyed to them by certain women; but this seems to have made but little or no impression on their minds. Again, he sends to them Peter and the two disciples who had travelled to Emmaus; but their evidence met with little more credit than the preceding. He now appears to them in person, allows them to touch him; he eats in their presence, and thus obviates all their objections. "Now while they were speaking," and debating "these things, at length," that is, late that same day, "the first of the week, he appeared to the eleven as they were at table, and the doors shut,"* and fast

* Luke xxiv. 37.

* Moli corporis, ubi divinitas erat, ostia clausa non obstiterunt; ille quippe non eis apertis, intrare potuit, quo nascentor virginitas matris inviolata permansit. St. Aug. Trac. in Joan.

locked "for fear of the Jews." On this occasion, "Jesus came and stood in the midst" of them, and said to them: Peace be to you," the usual and ancient salutation of the Jews. "It is I, fear not: and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he had risen again. But they being troubled and affrighted, supposed that they saw a spirit;" doubtless from the idea that no corporeal being could have access to them, shut up as they were in a private chamber. "And he said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me to have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet," with the marks of the nails which had fastened him to the cross, "and his side" that had been pierced. "The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. But while they yet believed not" with an entire conviction, "and wondered for joy," their minds fluctuating with different sensations of mistrust, of admiration, and of joy, "he said: Have you here any thing to eat? And they offered him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honey-comb. And when he had eaten before them, taking the remains he gave to them," as a further proof of his having eaten some of it.*

As by their incredulous disposition, they had rejected the peace which he first imparted to them, "he" now "said to them again: Peace be unto you. As my Father sent me" to labor for the salvation of men, "I also send you" for the same end, and authorize you to witness the things you have seen, and heard from me. "When he had said this, he breathed upon them" with his most sacred mouth, which was a figure of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds by way of inspiration, "and he said to them" the following words, which have ever since been used by the Church in the ordination of her ministers: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive,* they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." At his last supper, four days before, he had given to his apostles and their successors the power of consecrating his body and blood in the sacrament of the holy eucharist; and here he gave them power to forgive sins in the sacrament of penance, and thereby completed their sacerdotal character.

* Christ was pleased to eat after his resurrection, not to satisfy any hunger, of which his body was incapable, but to prove that his body was *truly* raised, and that himself was really present.

* These words clearly express the power of forgiving sins, which, as God, he gave to his apostles and to their successors the bishops and priests of his Church. They forgive sins in his name, as his ministers and instruments, even though they are sinners themselves. For in this they act not by their own power, nor in their own name, but in the name of God, who, as the Lord of creation, only can remit sins. This is, even by numerous Protestants, generally allowed to be done in the sacrament of baptism, as to the remission of original sin: and the Catholic Church has always held the same of God's ministers in the sacrament of penance. See the authorized common prayer-book of the church of England liturgy, in the article *Visitation of the Sick;—Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*

To priests is given a power to be exercised, not only by forgiving, but also by retaining: not only by absolving and loosing, but also by binding, by refusing or deferring absolution, according to the dispositions that are found in sinners, when they accuse themselves of their sins. From hence must needs follow an obligation on the sinners' part, to declare and confess their sins in particular to the ministers of God, who are appointed the spiritual judges and physicians of their soul. A judge must know the cause, and a physician the distemper; the one to pronounce a just sentence, the other to prescribe a suitable remedy.

"But Thomas, who is called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came;" yet he doubtless received the like power of forgiving sins either at this time or afterwards. "The other disciples, therefore, said to him" on his return: "We have seen the Lord." He immediately asked, if they had actually touched him, so as to be certain of its being no imaginary phantom, and "he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." These conditions were certainly highly unreasonable on the part of Thomas: for what could be more absurd, than not only to refuse to believe a fact on the testimony of others, but also to require the evidence both of the sight and touch? However, it pleased our blessed Saviour to satisfy this incredulous disciple, by affording him both an ocular and manual proof of the truth; and this, according to St. Austin,* was one of the reasons why he chose to retain the marks of his sacred wounds. Wherefore, "after eight days," when "his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them, Jesus cometh, the door being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be unto you. Then he saith to Thomas," with a most gracious condescension to his weakness: "Put in thy finger hither, and view my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side, and be not incredulous but faithful.† Thomas, who was doubtless much confounded at such an appearance, and now by divine grace more than convinced of his error, "answered and said to him: "My Lord and my God;"* thus acknowledging more than these scars evidenced to him, not only the resurrection of his true body, but the divinity of his person which effected it. "Jesus said to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; happy they who have not seen, and have believed," because they shall receive a recompense proportioned to the merit of their faith, which consists in believing what we do not see. Jesus here alluded not to the other apostles, who, in this respect, greatly resembled Thomas, but to all those who, in future ages, should, by means of their preaching, believe in him, without having seen him personally as the apostles. "Jesus did likewise many other miracles in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God," foretold by the prophets, "and that believing you may have life in his name," the life of grace here, and eternal life hereafter in heaven.

After the above manifestation we find no scruple or difficulty left in the minds of any of the apostles; and Almighty God permitted their former in-

* Nunquid non poterat Dominus sine cicatricibus resurgere? sed in corde discipulorum vulnera noverat, propter quæ sananda cicatrices in corpore suo servaverat,

† It does not appear from the evangelist that St. Thomas went and touched Christ's body; but it is more probable that he did as he was ordered, as St. Austin and other fathers observe. But how could the glorified body of Christ be palpable, which had entered in, the door being shut. St. Chrysostom answers, that our Lord could make his body palpable or not palpable, visible or invisible, as he pleased. "In talibus rebus tota ratio facti est potentia facientis," says St. Austin.

* What can be more clear and explicit against the Socinians than this testimony of Thomas for the divinity of Christ? Hence we find it strongly urged by St. Hilary against the Arians, lid. 7, de Trin.

credulity to furnish additional proofs of the resurrection of Jesus, and to establish its belief more effectually in the hearts of all mankind. In reality, all possible doubts on this subject, all objections which can be raised against it, have been here anticipated by the apostles, who in our stead experienced all those difficulties which we could have felt. Nothing therefore can be more equitable than that we should own ourselves convinced of the truth of the resurrection, in as perfect a manner as the apostles did, and that under the weight of their authority, we should believe those mysteries which they believed not until convinced by the most unexceptional evidence.

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

THE SEVENTH APPARITION OF JESUS, VIZ. BY THE SEA-SIDE. JOHN XXI. 1 TO 24.

Afterwards Jesus showed himself again to his disciples, near the lake of Tiberias, and he manifested himself after this manner. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathaniel who was of Cana in Gallilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples," in all seven. These two last some expositors conjecture to have been St. Andrew, Peters's brother, and St Philip, his fellow townsman. "Simon Peter saith to them I am going a-fishing. They reply: We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the ship, and that night they took nothing. Now when it was morning, Jesus stood on the shore," as it had happened before to Peter at our Lord's first calling him from his trade: "yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus then said to them: Young man, have you any thing to eat?" as if intending to buy some fish of them. "They answered him: No. He saith to them; Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find. They cast therefore; and now they were not able to draw it by reason of the multitude of fishes," which was an earnest of their future success in fishing after men. The disciple then, whom Jesus loved, saith to Peter: It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he had heard that it was the Lord, girded his vest about him' for he was stripped, and cast himself into the sea," moved by an extraordinary fervor and love for his Master. "But the other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from the land, but only about 200 cubits, drawing the net with the fishes. As soon then as they came to land, they saw coals burning, and a fish laid thereon, and bread," all miraculonsly provided by Christ for their refreshment. "Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes you have now caught," viz. make such addition as is necessary to what is already prepared, since this is designed merely to allay the first cravings of your hunger, and will not afford a sufficient meal for seven persons,

In obedience to the commands of Jesus, "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. And though there was so great a quantity, the net was not broken. Jesus saith to them: Come and dine," since your long fatigue during the night must rendered refreshment extremely necessary to you.

They sat down on the ground for that purpose, "and none of those that were eating, durst ask him: Who art thou?" It is probable that he appeared to them with a countenance different and brighter than before his death, and more full of majesty: yet "knowing that it was the Lord," by his features and voice, they were ashamed to ask or doubt of it. "And Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth it to them, and fish in like manner. This was now the third time* that Jesus appeared to his disciples," in any numerous assembly of them, "after he had risen from the dead," the first being on the day of his resurrection: the second, eight days afterwards.

"When therefore they had dined, Jesus," whose usual manner was to transfer the discourse to spiritual matters, saith to Simon Peter: Simon the son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He" modestly "answered: Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," declining to compare himself with others: he saith to him: "Feed my lambs," as I the chief pastor am now quitting the world. "He saith to him again: Simon the son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him a third time," that he might, as it were, reverse and atone for his three former denials by a threefold confession of his affection: Simon the son of John, lovest thou me?" Peter was troubled, because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me?" For it seemed as if he suspected the sincerity of his former protestations. "And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things," and all hearts, "thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my sheep,"* hereby showing that all his flock, both lambs and sheep, young and old, people and their pastors, were committed to his care and jurisdiction. Jesus conferred not this post of eminence and of important trust upon Peter in a clandestine manner, but in the presence of several witnesses, and even of his principal apostles; that all they who had been scandalized by his fall, might now be no less edified by his confession, and might see that his former appointment to the primacy of the church was not invalidated by his subsequent prevarication,

* This may be referred to the number of days, as St. Austin observes. For he first appeared to different persons on the very day of his resurrection; secondly, eight days afterwards; and then a third time.

* To *feed*, in the style of the holy scripture, is to guide, rule, and govern. "First Christ intrusted him with his lambs," says St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, "next with his sheep; because he made him not only the shepherd, but the shepherd of shepherds. Peter rules both subjects and prelates? He is therefore shepherd over all." On this occasion therefore Christ gave to St. Peter that supreme spiritual power which he had promised him, Matt. xvi. 18, and which the Catholic Church has always reverenced and acknowledged in the successors of St. Peter over all Christian churches. Hence St. Cyprian, Ep. 55, writing to Pope Cornelius, calls *Rome the chair of St. Peter, and the* PRINCIPAL CHURCH, *from which the unity of priesthood is risen.* In the second age we have the following testimony of St. Irenæus. "By apostolical tradition, which the Roman bishops have preserved, all seperatists are confounded. For to this Church, *by reason of its more powerful principality*, it is necessary that all churches have recourse." L. 3. c. 3. Let us remember that "Peter remains and lives in his successors:"—St. LEO Ser. 2.

but was now confirmed and established in the most public and authentic manner.

After our Lord had thus confirmed Peter as the chief steward and servant of his household, he was pleased to acquaint him also with what trials he was afterwards to undergo for his sake, that so he might be the better prepared for his future martyrdom. Wherefore he thus proceeded: Amen, Amen, I say unto thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird, and didst walk where thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said signifying by what death he should glorify God," viz. by the death of the cross, which accordingly happened in the thirteenth year of Nero, and before St. John wrote his gospel. "And when" Jesus "had spoke this," he arose from the place where he was seated, and to exhort Peter to aim at the realizing of the great love which he had expressed, "he saith to him: Follow me," that is, "follow the example I have given to thee, since henceforth thou wilt have to tread in my footsteps. "Peter," therefore, accompanied our Lord walking on the shore, and "turning, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also, at the supper, leaned on his breast, and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee? Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: And what will become of this man?" being anxious to know what was to happen to his friend. "Jesus saith to him," repressing his curiosity: "So* I will have him to remain till I come, and what is it to thee?" It is thy duty and concern to follow me. "This saying therefore," which was capable of admitting of different senses, "went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He shall not die, but, So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? This is that disciple,† who beareth testimony to these things, and hath written these things; and we know that his testimony is true."

CHAPTER CXLIX.

THE EIGHTH, NINTH, AND TENTH APPARITIONS OF JESUS.* MATT. XXVIII. 16 TO 20 MARK XVI. 15 TO 17. LUKE XXIV. 44 TO 49. ACTS I. 4 TO 8. 1 COR. XV. 6, 7.

The angel at the sepulchre, and Christ himself, as well before as after his resurrection, had foretold that he would go before, and would manifest himself to his disciples in Galilee. It was there he had lived about thirty years, had wrought the major part of his miracles, had formed the far greatest part of his disciples, and was most

* In the Greek it is—*If I will have him to remain*, and this is the true reading according to Estius, and Jansenius of Ghent, authorized by many Latin copies. Christ here signifies, in an obscure manner, that John should not, like Peter, die a violent death, but should pass out of this life by a natural dissolution. But others refer these words of Christ to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, an epoch which St. John survived.

† Some conjecture that these words were added by the church of Ephesus, to point out to the whole Church that

known. There he could likewise manifest himself to a much greater number of followers, without giving any umbrage to Pilate and the ruling powers, who would probably have been alarmed, had a numerous concourse of people assembled together in Judea, and at a small distance from Jerusalem. Wherefore "the eleven disciples," and others, "went into Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," and which is generally supposed to have been Mount Thabor, on which he was transfigured, a most beautiful hill, which is exactly round, and accessible only on one side. Here "he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: and seeing him, they adored him: but some doubted," that is, they had formerly entertained doubts, and particularly St. Thomas. But now every remainder of doubt was dissipated by the splendor of his presence: and they returned to their respective homes, effectually convinced of the truth of the resurrection which they were in future to announce to the whole world, and to seal with their blood.

"After that he was seen by James,"* but neither the time nor place are mentioned, "then by all the Apostles," probably the day of his ascension, and at Jerusalem, to which place they had now returned, for the feast of Pentecost. "And Jesus approaching, spoke to them, and said: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore into the whole world, preach the gospel to every creature," that is, to all mankind, as being, notwithstanding the diversity of nations and of tongues, the work of the same God, and created for one and the same end, viz. that of enjoying eternal happiness: and moreover, redeemed by the same price of Christ's precious blood. "Teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Christ here, in a few words, describes the functions of the apostleship under three heads. Of these, the first is preaching; the second is the administration of baptism, under which term is comprised the power of administering all the other sacraments; the third is the duty of instructing the faithful in all proper rules of conduct as to their life and manners. He requires them to teach mankind, both by words and example, to observe all the precepts which he had dictated, and to do all things enjoined by the gospel as necessary for eternal life. Under this head is com-

John was the author of this evangelical history, and to record their own assent to this his testimony by their signature. But the ancient fathers, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyril, St. Austin, expound them as they do the rest, without any such remark. Nor is it unusual for a person to write of himself as of a third person. It is what St. John hath done before.

* We must necessarily distinguish the apparition mentioned by St. Matthew, and which happened on a mountain in Galilee, from that spoken of by St. Luke in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which immediately preceded his ascension; for this last did not take place in Galilee, but near to Jerusalem. We annex to this last apparition what St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, relate of the words of Jesus Christ, although it be more probable that they are only the substance and abridgment of all the discourses which he had with his disciples during the forty days that he appeared to them after his resurrection. In order to have a more complete history of Christ's apparitions and of his ascension into heaven, it was necessary to have recourse to the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. St. Austin says (lib. 3, de Cons. Evang, c. 25) that there are ten apparitions of our Lord recorded in the four evangelists, which he specifies: but Maldonatus, on the 28th chap. of St. Matthew, enumerates thirteen. See Lambertinus, de Serv. Dei Beatif. lib. 3, c. 50.

* Viz. by James the *Less*, the brother of our Lord, and Bishop of Jerusalem. Our blessed Saviour probably showed him this favor, as St. Thomas observes, in reward of his great love and affection.

prised the power of establishing ecclesiastical laws and ordinances, and of enforcing the observance of them by spiritual censures.

Christ next points out the happiness of those who shall believe in him by their ministry, and the misery of those who remain in their infidelity; likewise the various gratuitous and extraordinary favors to be imparted to the faithful in the infancy of the Church, with a view to draw unbelievers to its standard, which in subsequent ages were more sparingly bestowed, and only upon those whom God was pleased to distinguish for their extraordinary sanctity.

Over and above these marks of his favor he adds a most solemn promise to his Church in the person of his apostles, of abiding visibly with it to the end of time, by a presence which will show itself in a constant protection and support, by the presence of his Spirit in a constant guidance of his Church, and even by a corporeal presence in the adorable sacrament of the altar. This solemn promise necessarily implies the perpetuity and visibility of his Church to the end of the world.

"He that believeth and is baptized," says Christ, "shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues," which they never learned: "they shall take up serpents," without any injury; "and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.* And behold, I am with you" and your successors "all days, even to the consummation of the world."* "And eating together with them,† he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem,‡ but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard," saith he, "by my mouth. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence," that is, cleansed and sanctified by the plentiful graces he shall pour upon you. "And he said to them: These are the words that I spoke to you, when I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and Psalms concerning me Then he opened their minds§ that they

* The gospel was at first confirmed by miracles; and still a lively faith of its truths will produce wonderful effects. It puts the power of God into the hands of men; it casts out the devil of sin; causeth them to speak the language of heaven; cures the corruption and venom of our hearts, and all the disorders that proceed from sin.

* So long, therefore, there must be a visible Church, under the protection and guidance of Christ its invisible head.

† In some Greek copies, *being assembled together.*

‡ Without this positive command, the apostles would by no means have chosen to continue at Jerusalem, now reeking with the blood of their divine Master. But Jerusalem is the place chosen by Christ for the pouring forth of his holy Spirit upon his apostles, because there was the greatest company of spectators to bear witness to so extraordinary an event; and as *there* had been the scenes of his greatest humiliations, so he was pleased to show forth *there* his power and glory.

§ These words of Christ evince the divine inspiration of some parts of the Old Testament. For how could *such things* be there written concerning Christ beforehand, unless the writers had been divinely inspired: but speaking generally of all the books of the Old and New Testament, we cannot be fully assured of their divine inspiration except from the testimony and authority of the Catholic Church, which was founded by Christ, and infalibly appointed by him to be our guide in spiritual matters. St. Angustin, one of the most sublime and acute geniuses that ever existed, declares that he *would not believe the gospels themselves, unless the authority of the Church compelled him to it*;—(Cont. Epis. Fund. c. 4,) This invested authority of the Church is often strangely misrepresented by some Protestants, as if we considered it equal to the authority of God himself. The truth is, we mark an infinite difference between the authority of God, who alone creates articles of faith by revealing them, and the authority of the Church, commissioned by him as his instrument to declare and make them known to the faithful.



The Ascension

might understand the scriptures," pointing out such particular text as related to himself. What enlarged views, may we suppose, now presented themselves to their understandings, relative to God's infinite love and wisdom in the redemption of man through Jesus Christ! Their eyes, which before rested in the *letter*, unable to see aught but the typic histories, now saw through them, and felt their *spirit*, like a new-born day, breaking in upon their hearts, showing Christ unto them, and inflaming them with his love. "And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day; and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things; and" in order that you may have courage to publish them, "I will send the promise of my Father upon you: but stay you in the city till you be endued with" this "power from above. Now they who were met together," still prepossessed with the notion which they had entertained of the temporal kingdom of Israel, "asked of him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time re-establish the kingdom of Israel? And he said to them," checking their inordinate curiosity: "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost, coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me" of my doctrine, of my divinity, of my incarnation and resurrection "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth."

CHAPTER CL.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS INTO HEAVEN. MARK. XVI. 19, 20. LUKE XXIV. 50 TO 53. JOHN XXI. 25. ACTS I. 9 TO 12.

WE now come to the conclusion of the evangelical history, which terminates with the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. He had finished the work for which he came down from heaven and dwelt among us. He had enlightened the world by his doctrine, and redeemed it by his death: by his miracles he had confirmed the truth of his revealed religion; he had established his Church, which he commands us to hear; he had promised to assist this Church with the Spirit of truth, to the end of ages; he had appointed his vicar as a universal pastor, to preside over the Church in his name, and to feed his flock, both sheep and lambs, in his absence; nothing more remained than to take possession of that seat of bliss which he had merited for his own sacred humanity and for us. Therefore, on the fortieth day after his resurrection from the dead, "he led" his disciples "as far as Bethania,"* at the foot of Mount Olivet,

* Bethania stood on the remotest part of Mount Olivet, toward the bottom on the descent. The mountain itself, or its summit, was a Sabbath day's journey from the city, which

about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem; "and after he had spoken to them,"* and given them his last instructions, "while they looked on, was raised up into heaven, and lifting up his hands he blessed them, and it came to pass while he blessed them, that he departed from them,† and was" by his own power, gradually carried up into heaven," about mid-day,‡ as we learn from tradition:* "and a" bright "cloud received him out of their sight." This cloud was expressive of glory, and by it we may understand the attendance of angels who received and accompanied him to heaven.† "And he sitteth on the right hand of God" the Father,§ being, as he always was, and ever will be, the same con-substantial and co-eternal God with him and the Holy Ghost, in one and the same divine nature, and at the same time our Advocate, our High-Priest and Mediator, as man. "And while they were" attentively "beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven," in astonishment at this stupendous miracle never before seen? "This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven;" thus giving them a positive assurance of his second coming, viz. at the last day, to judge the living and

teems to have admitted some latitude in different places, but to have generally been about eight furlongs, or one of our measured miles. Josephus, de Bell. Jud. Lib. 5, c. 8. counts only six furlongs from Mount Olivet to the city, but must speak of its first ascent, or its foot toward the city. See Reland, *de Locis Palestinæ*, 2, p. 449, and p. 337. Bethphage and Bethania were two villages situated on the ascent of Mount Olivet: the former was nearer the city, and belenged to the priests. See chap. 109, in the note on Matt. xxi. 1.

* Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine, mentions it as a tradition among the primitive Christians, that Christ gave the holy mysteries to his disciples in a cave on the mountain before he ascended into heaven.

† Several fathers of the fourth, fifth, eighth, and all succeeding ages, and modern travellers, assure us that the prints of Christ's feet remain in the hard rock in the place where he last stood on earth, and have ever been devoutly visited by pious pilgrims, at least ever since the fourth century. "There remain the prints of his footsteps," says St. Austin; "they are now adored where he last stood on earth, on the spot whence he ascended into heaven." The same is affirmed by St. Optatus: St. Paulinus, Ep. 31, ad Sever.; St. Sulpicious Severus; the ancient and accurate imputed author of the book *On the Hebrew places*, among the works of St. Jerom; Bede, l. de Locis Sanctis; and modern travellers, quoted by Roswoide, not in St. Paulin; Muratori; Tillemont, etc. Hence, Cassaubon, Exer 16, in Bar., a learned Protestant critic, calls it a wonder well deserving credit. St. Paulinus and St. Sulpicius Severus tell us the spot could never be covered with any pavement, although this had often been attempted; also, that no violence had been able to efface these vestiges. This will appear the more wonderful, if we consider that the Roman army, when Titus besieged the city, was encamped upon Mount Olivet, and that the empress Helena built a church upon this very spot, as Eusebius relates. Thus was literally accomplished that prophecy of Zachary xiv. 4; *His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is over against Jerusalem toward the east.*

A learned modern critic pretends to prove, from the authorities of the prophets and the fathers, that Christ ascended towards the east, and that his coming again will be in like manner from the east. See Mr. Gregory's notes under the title "*Oriens*, Nomen Ejus." But it is not clear, that the east, or *the rising sun*, is not applied to Christ in a metaphorical sense. Moreover those who have visited the holy places affirm, that the prints of Christ's feet are turned towards the west, and therefore Christ, in ascending up to heaven, must have regarded not the east, but the west, viz. the favored nations of Europe.

* Fifth of May.

* Apostolical Constit. lic. 5, c. 19.

† Thus, *I will appear in the cloud*, Lev. xvi. 2, means from between the two cherubims: Ex. xxv. 22.—See Interpreters. St. Mark, chap. xvi. ver. 14, 19, mentions only the apostles as witnesses of Christ's ascension; it is, however, most probable that the Blessed Virgin was likewise present on this occasion, as well as others who are mentioned in Acts i. 13.

‡ By these words it is not to be understood that Jesus is confined to that particular posture of his body, or that the Father has hands or human shape; for God is a pure incorporeal and all-perfect spirit. The image of God, as he is in himself, comes not within the reach of our mortal senses. When the scripture, therefore, speaks of God, it uses such an imagery of language as is adapted to our senses, that it may thereby convey to us some imperfect knowledge of those sublime mysteries which are ineffable in themselves and incomprehensible to our weak understanding. Thus we are informed that Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, to signify that, as man, our Lord is raised to that height of glory, and to that supreme beatitude, than which there is nothing higher and nothing greater in the whole bliss of heaven; and that he moreover holds the same sovereign dominion with the Father over all creatures; because as God, he is equal to the Father in power, in wisdom, and in all perfection. See Pouget, p. 256, ed. in fol.

the dead.* And the apostles, "having adored" Jesus, "returned to Jerusalem with great joy," as well for the incomparable glory conferred on their divine Master, as also for his promised return to make them partakers of it; which perhaps they apprehended much nearer at hand than it really was. So they went back cheerfully "from the mount that is called Olivet, which is nigh Jerusalem within a Sabbath's journey," or about one of our measured miles: "and they were constantly in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. But" after receiving the Holy Ghost, "they, going forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working withal," in an invisible manner by his grace, "and" exteriorly by "confirming the word with miracles that followed.† But there are also many other" wonderful "things that Jesus did" upon earth, "which if they were written in particular, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." This hyperbolical expression, not unusual in holy scripture, signifies that a very great number of things which Christ said and did have not been recorded in the gospel. It may, perhaps, likewise denote, that the limited understanding of mankind would not be able to embrace or comprehend so extensive a recital as the several wonders, performed by our blessed Redeemer, would necessarily require.* This is an abridgment of what the Son of God incarnate has done and suffered in order to deliver us from sin and hell, and teach us the way to everlasting happiness. It only remains that we co-operate on our part with his merciful designs, and show ourselves to be his true followers, by walking in that way which he has pointed out to us by his own example, as well as by his heavenly doctrine. Wherefore, *denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works.*†

* It is generally considered highly probable that his descent will be in this very place from whence he ascended, as appears from the last chapter of Zachary, ver. 3, 4, 5, where it is said; *The Lord shall come, and all the saints with him, and shall fight against the nations, and his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, and the valley of Jehosaphat on the east.* This mountain, it is said, shall be divided in the midst by a terrible earthquake, like to that in the time of Ozias, to make as it were a plain and level way through it for the concourse of the multitudes thither. See Zachary xiv. 4, 5, etc., Joel iii. 11, 12, etc.; where it is likewise said, that the Lord will come down with his mighty ones, and will gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehosophat, and that there he will sit to judge them all round about. In effect, what place more proper than this for the triumph and glory of our Lord, seeing it was first the theatre of his sufferings and ignominies?

† For a more detailed account of the establishment of Christianity, see the Acts of the Apostles and Fleury's Church History.

* St. Austin, in Jan. trac. 124.

† Ep. to Titus, ii. 12.

CHAPTER CLI.

THE GLORIOUS LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

IT is a great subject of consolation to reflect, that the same glorious life into which Jesus entered by his ascension, is destined also for his followers.* For he acquainted his apostles, that he went to prepare a place for them; and St. Paul assures us,† that for us he *entered* heaven as our *forerunner*, that we may follow him from this time forward by hope, and that this hope is to serve us as a strong and sure anchor in the various agitations of this mortal life.

As for the life which Jesus Christ enjoys in heaven, although the gospel represents him as sitting on the right hand of God, in order to express that happy state of perfect rest which, as man, he enjoys in the highest place of heaven, yet this rest is no impediment to his interesting himself in our behalf. In effect, as he came upon earth, not only to merit the glory of his sacred humanity, but likewise to work the salvation of all true believers; if at present there be nothing more for him to do here on earth, he has still to act for the salvation of his saints, till all of them are entered into the participation of his glory. In heaven, therefore, he finishes this great work of man's redemption, which he began on earth. Though he be in heaven, he is still the head of the Church here on earth, as the apostle calls him,* and in this quality he governs her by the pastors he gives her; enlightens her by his doctors; sanctifies her by his sacraments; protects her by the succors of his grace, and gives her life by his Spirit.

It is there that he prays incessantly for us, and as our *Advocate*† pleads our cause before his Father; as our *Mediator* he offers him our prayers, and obtains for us those graces which we ask; and as our *High-Priest* and *Victim* offers daily that same blood which he once shed on the cross for the salvation of the world. Hence St. John‡ beheld him in heaven under the figure of a lamb slain, and laid on the altar which is before the throne of God. He is there as on a throne of grace and mercy, that we may have recourse to him for seasonable aid, and may obtain the remission of our sins, before he appears on the throne of his justice to judge the world.§

In fine, it is from heaven that he calls upon us to contemplate that glory which by the shedding of his blood he has merited for himself and for us; and he desires that the view of those eternal goods which he has prepared for us, should give us a contempt of all

* Life of Christ, translated from the French, and printed in the year 1739.
† Heb. vi. 19. 20.

* Ephes. i. 20, and iv. 13.
† 1 John ii. 1.
‡ Apoc. v. 6,
§ Heb. iv. 16.



Prayer.

earthly things, and should incite us to follow him in the way he has traced out for us both by his doctrine and holy example. To this effect, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews,* makes the following exhortation, which expresses the advantage we ought to make of all that has been said of the life of Jesus Christ. Having therefore, brethren, a confidence of entering into the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, in following this new way which he has traced out for us in his own flesh; and having a high-priest established over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with the clean water" of baptism. "Let us continue firm and immovable in our faith, and in the hope of that glory which he has promised us, since he is faithful in his promises. And that we may deserve it, let us consider one another to provoke unto charity and to good works, and so much the more, as you see the last day approaching. For if we sin wilfully, after having received the knowledge of truth, what can we expect but a terrible judgment, and the rage of that avenging fire which shall consume the adversaries of God? A man who had broken the law of Moses, was without mercy condemned to die: how much more do you think will he deserve punishments in the new law, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the covenant unclean with which he was sanctified" in baptism, "and who hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace? For we know who hath said: Vengeance belongeth to me, and I will repay. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

This living God of whom St. Paul speaks, is the very same person whom we have seen in this history dying on the cross for the salvation of men. He was judged; but he will judge in his turn, and judge us both respecting the instructions which he has given us, and the examples which he has left us in his mortal life. He lived subject to our miseries, and suffered death, which was the punishment of sin; but he rose again glorified, and entered into the possession of eternal happiness. He was first what we are, that we may one day be what he is. If we imitate his life and death, we shall follow him in his resurrection and glory. But we must not pretend to the happiness which he now enjoys, unless we merit it as he did—and unless we walk in the same way in which he walked to arrive at it.

If, on the contrary, we neglect to obey his laws, and to imitate his actions, we not only renounce the glory to which he calls us, but moreover consign ourselves to everlasting torments. For there are but two ways: one which leads to life, and the other to death; and whoever is not in the first, by a necessary consequence walks in the last.

Jesus Christ himself is the way that leads to heaven; and we walk by him when we practise the truths which he has taught, and make his life a model of ours. To live otherwise than he

* Heb. x. 19. etc.

* See Rutter's "Explanation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews," which may be considered as an appendix to the present work.

lived, is not to follow him, but to go astray and lose ourselves. This is a point of the utmost importance, which is generally too little considered. Men examine not the way they tread, but still pursue it, and at the end of their course they find themselves engulfed in the precipice, because they have followed the track which leads to it.

To prevent so dreadful a misfortune, Christians can do nothing more important to their salvation, than to meditate continually on the life of Jesus Christ, considering it as a glass in which they are to discover their defects and blemishes. They must consider Jesus Christ on earth as their guide and their light, comparing what they do with what he did and taught; and must confess that they are in darkness and out of the way, when their conduct bears not a due conformity to his example or his precepts. They must consider him in heaven as the end to which they ought continually to aspire, in order that, amidst the fatigues and difficulties of the narrow way, they may be animated by the prospect of the glory which he has promised. Finally, they must think continually on his first and second coming. The first has taught them the preparation which they ought to make for the second, since in the latter they will be judged by the instructions given them in the former. No plea will be then allowed from the customs, examples, and false notions of the world, by a Judge, who has forewarned them that he shall judge them by the doctrine which himself has taught, and by the life he led and proposed as their model.

To appear therefore with confidence before him in that great day when he shall judge all men, let us listen to the admonition given to us by his beloved disciple. "And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be confounded by him at his coming."* And to know what it is to abide in Jesus Christ, let us seriously consider these other words of the same St. John: "He that says he abides in Jesus Christ, ought himself to walk even as he has walked."†

* 1 John ii. 28.
† 1 John ii. 6.

END OF THE SIXTH AND LAST PART

OF THE

LIFE OF OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE INSTRUMENTS OF CHRIST'S PASSION AND DEATH.

As the sacred passion of Christ is the source of all our happiness and good, so the instruments of it are justly considered as objects of our respect and veneration. "If the ark," says St. Jerom, "was held in such high veneration among the Jews, how much more ought Christians to respect the wood of the cross, whereon our Saviour offered himself a bleeding victim for our sins." By devoutly respecting the instruments of Christ's passion, we profess our faith in him who suffered for us, we exite our hope in his merit, enkindle his love in our breasts, and renew the grateful remembrance of his death. We shall, therefore, subjoin the following account respecting these sacred instruments, by which our Redeemer triumphed over sin and the devil, and purchased for us mercy, grace, and salvation.

1. THE PILLAR AT WHICH OUR LORD WAS SCOURGED.*

This was anciently kept at Jerusalem with other holy relics on Mount Sion, as mentioned by St. Gregory of Tours,† Venerable Bede,* St. Prudentius,† and St. Jerom.‡ It remained in the same place till the thirteenth century, when it was brought to Rome by Cardinal John Columna, Apostolic Legate in the East, under Pope Honorius III. anno 1213. It was placed in a little chapel in the church of St. Praxedes, and is still shown there. The pillar is of gray, or black and white marble, one foot and a half long, or two Italian feet, and one foot in diameter at the bottom, and eight inches at the top, where is an iron ring to which criminals were tied. Some think it only the upper part of the pillar, mentioned by St. Jerom; but others, with more probability, maintain it to be entire, as there appear no marks of a fracture. The Jews scourged criminals first on the back; then often on the belly, and also on both sides: which seems likewise to have been the Roman custom.

2. THE CROWN OF THORNS.

What kind of thorns these were, is a question among the learned:§ they

* We here transcribe from Alban Butler, as his account coincides with that of Sandinus and others.

† L. i, de Clor, Mart. c. 7.

* In Lucum, c. 23.

† In Euchir.

‡ Ep. 27.

§ "Corona fuit de juncis *Marinis* sicut etiam vidimus in

were platted together so as entirely to cover the top of Christ's head, like a cap, and not merely as a wreath or fillet to bind the temples or forehead. St. Bridget, in the fourth book of her Revelations, chap. 40, says, that this "thorny crown was pressed down upon his head, reaching to the middle of the forehead." It was given by the emperor Baldwin II. to St. Louis as to his cousin and great benefactor, when the city of Constantinople was no longer considered as a place of security against the Saracens and Greeks; also in gratitude for his extraordinary contributions to the defence of the Eastern empire and the holy places. St. Louis afterwards in requital voluntary paid off a loan which that emperor had borrowed of the Venetians. William of Nangis, Vincent of Beauvais, and other French historians of that time, relate how this sacred treasure was, with great devotion, carried in a sealed case, by holy religious men, by the way of Venice into France. St. Louis with the queen-mother, his brothers, and many prelates and princes, met it five leagues beyond Sens. The pious king and Robert of Artois, his second brother, being barefoot and in their shirts, carried it into that city, to the cathedral of St. Stephen, accompanied by a numerous procession bathed in tears, which the sentiments of gratitude and religion drew from their eyes. It was thence conveyed to Paris, where it was received with extraordinary solemnity. St. Louis built for its reception the Holy Chapel, as it is called, and annexed thereto a rich foundation of a chapter of canons. Some thorns have been distributed from this treasure to other churches, and some have been made in imitation of them. They are for the most part very long,

Thesauris Regis Francarum:" Durandus in Rationale Off. l. 6, c. 77. But this is denied by Martinus de Rio, Lec. 9, de Passione, who had also seen the crown of thorns at Paris.

3. THE FORM OF OUR SAVIOUR'S CROSS

To understand the form of our Redeemer's cross, we must observe, that there are some crosses that have only three extremities, in the shape of a Roman T, or crutch. This is sometimes called St. Anthony's cross: there is another kind of cross, which is called St. Andrew's cross, made of two equal pieces of wood, obliquely crossing one another in the middle, after the manner of a Roman X. The reason why this is termed St. Andrew's cross, is because he is said to have been crucified on a cross of this description. The third kind of cross is this †, and is commonly made use of in our churches from the resemblance it is supposed to have with the cross on which Christ died. I know indeed that St. Jerom and Tertullian seem to insinuate that this cross was in the shape of a Roman T; but they must be understood as speaking of it separated from the *title*, which was a board elevated in the middle. Hence St. Justin,* St. Irenæus,† and others mentioned by Gretzer, speak of the cross as having four ends or extremities; one fixed in the earth, two formed by the cross beams to which his arms were nailed, and the fourth raised in the middle by the title, which must have been twelve inches long.‡ This seems likewise to be confirmed by what St. Paul says in his Epistle to the

* Dial. cum Tryphone, § 91, p. 188.
† L. 2, adversus Hæreses, c. 42.
‡ See Lipsius de Cruce, lib. 3, c. 14.

Ephesians, iii. 18, when he describes four dimensions of the cross of Christ, viz. its *breadth*, its *length*, its *height* and its *depth*. In this sense St. Austin likewise explains it, considering the height to be that piece of wood which is elevated above the transverse beam which makes its breadth.*

It is dubious of what kind of wood the cross of our Saviour was formed, According to Lipsius and Rocca it was of oak; for this abounded in Judea, and the particles of this sacred wood which have been cut off confirm the conjecture. Gretzer, however, is of a different opinion.

Nothing appears in the ancient fathers to ascertain the length and breadth of the holy cross. It was probably of the usual size, and such as was prepared for persons of mean rank. For otherwise Christ could not have carried it, exhausted as he was with the loss of blood, and spent with fatigue and ill treatment.

4. THE DISCOVERY OF THE CROSS

Is kept on the 3d of May, and is a festival in memory of this holy cross being found by St. Helen in the year 326, about 180 years after it had been buried by the heathens. For out of an aversion to Christianity, they had done all in their power to conceal the place where it lay, and where our Saviour was buried. They had therefore heaped upon his sepulchre a great quantity of stones and rubbish, besides building a temple to Venus; that those who came thither to adore him, might seem to pay their worship to a marble idol representing this false deity. They had, moreover, erected a statue to Jupiter in the place where our Saviour rose from the dead, as we are informed by St. Jerom; which figure continued there from the emperor Adrian's time to Constantine's reign. The precautions of the persecutors evidently show the veneration which Christians must have paid from the beginning to the instruments of our redemption. Helena, Constantine's mother, being inspired with a great desire to find the identical cross on which Christ had suffered for our sins, came to Jerusalem, and consulted all those whom she thought likely to assist her in compassing her pious design She was by them credibly informed, that if she could find out the sepulchre, she would likewise find out the instruments of the punishment; it being always a custom among the Jews to make a great hole near the place where the body of the criminal was buried, and to throw into it whatever belonged to his execution; looking upon all these things as detestable objects, and which for that reason ought to be removed out of sight. The pious empress, therefore, ordered the profane building to be pulled down, the statues to be broken in pieces, and the rubbish to be removed; and upon digging to a great depth, they discovered the holy sepulchre, and near it three crosses; also the nails which had pierced our Saviour's body, and the *title* which had been affixed to his cross. By this discovery they understood that one of the three crosses was *that* which they were in quest of, and that the other two belonged to the two malefactors between whom our Saviour had been

§ Ep. 147 alias 132.

crucified. But as the *title* was found separate from the cross, a difficulty remained to distinguish which of the three was *that* cross on which our divine Redeemer had consummated his sacrifice for the salvation of the world. In this perplexity, the holy bishop, Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the empress to cause the three crosses to be carried to the sick person, not doubting but God would discover which was the cross they sought for. This being done, St. Macarius prayed that God would have regard to their faith, and after his prayer, applied the crosses singly to the patient, who was immediately and perfectly recovered by the touch of one of the crosses, the other two having been tried without effect. St. Helen, full of joy for having found the treasure which she had so earnestly sought, and so highly esteemed, built a church on the spot, and lodged it there with great veneration, having provided an extraordinary rich case for it. She afterwards carried part of it to the emperor Constantine, then at Constantinople, who received it with great veneration:* another part she sent, or rather carried to Rome to be placed in the church which she built there, under the name of *The Holy Cross of Jerusalem*, where it remains to this day. The *title* was sent by St. Helen to the same church in Rome, and deposited on the top of an arch, where it was found in a case of lead in 1492, as may be read at length in Bozius.* The inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, is in red letters, and the wood was whitened. Thus it was in 1492, but these colors are since faded. Also the words *Jesus* and *Judæorum* are eaten away: the board is nine, but must have been originally twelve inches long. The main part of the cross St. Helen inclosed in a silver shrine, and committed to the care of St. Macarius, that it might be delivered down to posterity as an object of veneration. It was accordingly kept with singular respect in the magnificent church which she and her son built at Jerusalem, and was shown publicly to the people at Easter. This stately church was hence called the *Basilic of the Holy Cross;* it was also called the church *of the Sepulchre*, or *of the Resurrection*, though this was properly the title only of the holy chapel which stood over the sepulchre or cavern in which our Saviour was buried, which was in the garden adjoining to Mount Calvary; so that this great church covered the sepulchre, and was extended so far on Mount Calvary as also to include the rock Golgatha, and the very place where the cross of Christ stood at his crucifixion. This extensive building was inclosed within the walls of Jerusalem when that city was rebuilt.† The finding of the cross by St. Helen

* It was out of a religious respect to the sacred instrument of the death of Christ, that Constantine, in the twentieth year of his reign, forbade the cross to be used in the punishment of malefactors in any part of the Roman dominions, which decree has been observed ever since throughout all Christendom.

* Tr. de Cruce, lib. 1, c. 2.

† This history of the discovery of the cross is related by St. Cyril in his Epistle to the emperor Constantius, by St. Ambrose in his funeral oration on the death of Theodosius; by Rufinus, l. i.; St. Chrysostom, etc., who lived in the same age, It is therefore strange how James Basnage could so far forget them, as to say that Gregory of Tours is the first of those who have spoken of it. Hist. de Imp. lib. 6, c. 14.

happened in the year of our Lord 326, in the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign, the thirteenth of the pontificate of Sylvester, and the first after the council of Nice.

5. THE NAILS.

As to the *nails* with which Christ was fastened to the cross, they were found together with the cross, as before observed. It seems most probable, that four nails* were made use of in Christ's crucifixion; two for his hands and two for his feet, though some pretend that the latter were fastened across with one. The Romans fixed little broad pieces of wood on the crosses of malefactors for the feet to rest upon, as Pliny mentions, and this was probably observed in regard to our Saviour's cross. One of these nails St. Helen threw into the Adriatic Sea, to lay a violent storm in which she was in danger of perishing, and which, according to St, Gregory of Tours, immediately ceased. Perhaps, as Gretzer observes, it was not thrown into the sea irrecoverable, but only held under water. For it is not likely that St. Helen would be willing totally to deprive herself and others of so great a treasure; and this explanation St. Gregory himself seems to insinuate.† St. Ambrose‡ and others testify, that her son Constantine the Great fixed another nail in a rich diadem of pearls which he wore on the most solemn occasions; and that for a protection he set a third in a costly bridle which he used. This bridle, and the sacred nails, were preserved at Constantinople with great respect till 550, when they were brought to Rome, and probably by St. Gregory the Great, who was then legate at Constantinople, to Constantine Tiberius Augustus; for it appears that he returned to Rome an. 586, as Baronius shows, loaded with gifts, that is, with sacred relics. Calvin pretends to reckon fourteen or fifteen nails, held for genuine; but names some never heard of except by himself. Some multiplication* of these nails has sprung from the filings of that precious relic put into other nails made like it. The true nail, kept at Rome, in the church of the Holy Cross, has been manifestly filed, and is now without a point, as may be seen in all pictures of it. St. Charles Borromæo, a prelate most rigorous in the approbation of relics, had many nails made like that which is kept at Milan, and distributed them after they had touched the holy nail. He gave one as a relic to King Philip II. These are all like that at Rome. St. Gregory the Great also, and other ancient popes, sent filings of the chains of St. Peter as relics, and occasionally put something of them into other chains made like them.†

6. THE HOLY LANCE

Which opened Christ's sacred side, is kept at Rome but has no point. Andrew of Crete, who lived in the seventh century,‡ says that it was buried together with the cross. At least

* So Innocent III affirms, St, Bridget, Rev. l. i, c. 10, and the most learned among the ancients and moderns. See Ben. XIV.

† Deponi jubet in Pelagus.

‡ De Ob. Theod.

* To the number of twenty-five. See Justus Fontavinus in Disser. de Corona Ferrea Langobardorum, an. 1717.

† See on this subject Lucas Tudensis who flourished an 1236, lib, 2, Adversus Albigenses, c. 11.

‡ De Exal, Crucis.

St. Gregory of Tours,* and Venerable Bede,† testify, that in their time it was kept at Jerusalem. For fear of the Saracens it was buried privately at Antioch, in which city it was found under ground, an. 109, and wrought many miracles, as Robert the Monk‡ and many eye-witnesses testify. It was first carried to Jerusalem, and soon after to Constantinople. At the time this city was taken by Godfrey of Bouillon, the emperor Baldwin II. sent the point of it to Venice as a pledge for a loan of money. St. Louis, King of France, redeemed this relic, by paying off the sum for which it lay in pledge, and caused it to be conveyed to Paris, where it is still kept in the *holy chapel*, The rest of the lance remained at Constantinople after the Turks had taken that city, till in 1492 the sultan Bajazet sent it by an ambassador in a rich beautiful case to Pope Innocent VIII., adding that the point was in the possession of the King of France.

7. THE HOLY SPONGE,

Tinged with blood, made use of at our Lord's crucifixion, is shown at Rome in the church of St. John Lateran, and held in great veneration. For while the malefactor hung bleeding on the cross, it was usual, by means of a sponge, to apply vinegar to his wounds, that by its astringent quality it might serve to stanch the blood in some degree, and prevent the criminal being put out of his pain by death sooner than was intended.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST,

Which is kept in some places, and especially at Mantua, seems to be what has sometimes issued from the miraculous bleeding of some crucifix,* when pierced in derision by Jews or pagans; instances of which are recorded in authentic histories.

Assiduous meditation on the passion of Christ is the great school of Christian perfection; the saints found in it their comfort and their joy; here they feasted their souls with the sweet fruits of love and devotion, learned to die to themselves, and entered into the sentiments of Christ crucified. Happy those Christians who, like St. Paul, *glory in the cross* of Christ, and who can truly say with him, that the world *is crucified* to them, and they to the world.†

CHAPTER II.

ON CHRIST'S PERSON.

Whether our Saviour's figure was comely and beautiful, or deformed and unseemly, has been a celebrated question among the learned, both of ancient and modern times. Between the

‡ L. de Glor, Mart. c. 17.
§ De Loc. Sanc. c. 2.
‖ L. 7.

* Sanguis autem ille, qui in quibusdam Ecclesiis pro reliquiis conservatur, non fluxit de latere Christi, sed miraculose dicitur effluxisse de quadam imagine Christi percussa.—St Thos. 3, p. 54.

† Ep. to the Gal. vi. 14.

two opinions there is a middle way, which to us seems to approach nearer to truth, and which is adopted by St. Thomas of Aquin, Calmet, and others. There is a certain kind of beauty which is worldly, carnal, and effeminate: this did not become Jesus Christ, and cannot, with propriety, be ascribed to him. Such kind of beauty does not accord with what the Scriptures relate of our Saviour's penitential, laborious, poor, and mortified life; it is repugnant to that quality of *man of sorrows* which he assumed to expiate and atone for the sins of the world. But, on the other hand, to pretend that he was deformed, ill-favored, of an austere, forbidding countenance, is to draw a picture highly unbecoming the sacred humanity of the Son of God, and totally unfounded in sacred scripture. The ancients who were of this opinion, ground it merely on certain passages of scripture, which manifestly refer to the time of his passion, when oppressed with sorrows, and covered with ignominies. But St. Jerom and St. Chrysostom were, on the contrary, persuaded that a certain splendor and brightness distinguished the countenance of our Saviour, and inspired all his beholders with love and respect.* At least we may reasonably suppose, with St. Thomas, that Christ possessed that kind of corporeal beauty which arises from regular, manly features, and that he displayed a certain air of comeliness and dignity which impressed the spectators with affection and reverence.†

Nicephorus Callistus says, that St. Luke took the portraits of our Saviour, of his blessed mother, and his apostles, and that their pictures were thus disseminated through the world. He gives, in the following terms, the description of Jesus Christ, such as he *had received it from the ancients*: "He had a very comely face; his stature was seven feet;* his hair flaxen, not very thick but curling; his eyebrows were black, and nearly semicircular; his eyes large, lively, and yellowish, and therefore uncommonly beautiful; his nose long; his beard auburn, and rather short. But the hair of his head he wore very long, having never had it shaved nor touched by any hand, save that of his blessed mother in his infancy: he carried his neck not stiff and upright, but somewhat inclined: his complexion was of a pale cast, and his face was neither round nor pointed, but, like that of his mother, rather long and beautified with vermillion. One saw gravity, prudence, sweetness, and mildness painted in his countenance; in short, he resembled altogether his divine and spotless mother." So far Nicephorus, a writer, it is true, who, in point of antiquity and authority, is of no great weight, yet to whom we are indebted for some curious facts and anecdotes not now to be found in other authors.† With regard to

* St. Jer. c. 9 in Matt., likewise in Ep. 140; St. Chrysos. Hom. 28, in Matt.

† Assumpsisse Christum perfectum corporis pulchritudinem, quam in corpore humano ac virili, esse oportebat, sine causa ac temere negare ausus est Michael Medina. Suarez, in 3 p. D. Tho.

* Vavasor, in his book *On The Figure of Christ*, c. 3 § 5, is of opinion that Nicephorus erroneously substitutes in this place seven for six feet; for the last occurs in Epiphanius, whom Nicephorus intends to follow.

† There is found likewise a very particular description of our Saviour's person, in a letter of one Publius Lentulus, to Tiberius Cæsar, which Fabricius gives in his Apocryphal Code of the New Testament, t. 1, p. 302. It is not mentioned by any ancient writer, and is therefore considered by

Christ's person, he declares that he received his information from the ancients, and though he does not specify from which of them in particular, yet, since Eusebius, in his Church History,* relates that the pictures of Christ were religiously preserved down to his time, it is not improbable that some of these may have been handed down to after ages,† and may have given occasion to the above description. As, however, nothing certain occurs in history concerning the person of Christ, we shall conclude our remarks on this subject, by observing, with Tillemont, that if the knowledge of this particular had been necessary, it would unquestionably have been communicated to us by the channel either of scripture or tradition. Instead of employing our tnoughts, therefore, on the form of Christ's body, it will be a much more profitable exercise of our piety to study how we may render our souls conformable to *his*. It is no part of our duty to bring our corporeal appearance to the likeness of *his*, and therefore, to know what this was is not material. With the form of his mind we are sufficiently acquainted from holy scripture, and it is by humble and fervent prayer we may obtain grace and strength to form our lives upon his actions and precepts. On this resemblance depends the perfection of a Christian life, for they whom God *has predestinated* to eternal glory, are first to *be conformable to the image of the Son*;* that as *they have borne the image of the old man*, by following the desires of the flesh, *they may bear the image of the new man* Jesus Christ, the model of all sanctity and perfection. Let us therefore regulate our whole coduct, both interior and exterior, according to the model which Jesus Christ has left us; let us animate all our actions and virtues with his spirit; let us perform them in union with the actions and virtues which he exercised when here on earth Thus shall we trace in ourselves his sacred image, our most indifferent actions will be ennobled and acquire a new degree of merit, and by being done in Jesus, for Jesus, and with Jesus, will become in some measure the very actions of Jesus Christ; so that we may say with the apostle: *I live; no, not I, but Christ liveth in me.*†

the learned as a forgery. I shall, however, subjoin it for the sake of those who may be curious to peruse it.

It being the usual custom of Roman governors to advertise the senate and people of such material things as happened in their provinces, in the days of the emperor Tiberius Lentulus, who was Governor of Judea, is reported to have sent the following epistle to the senate concerning our Saviour: "There appeared in these our days a man of great virtue, named Jesus Christ, who is still living among us. By the people he is received as a prophet of truth; but his own disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and cureth all manner of diseases; a man somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as the beholders may both love and fear. His hair is of the color of a ripe chestnut, plain to his ears, whence downwards it is lighter, curling, and waving about his shoulders. In the middle of his head a seam parteth his lovely tresses, after the manner of the Nazarites; his forehead is plain and very delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, beautified with a lovely red; his nose and mouth of charming symmetry; his beard thickish, in color like his hair, not very long, but forked in the middle; his look is both innocent and mature; his eyes gray, clear, and quick. In reproving he is terrible, in admonishing courteous and fair spoken, pleasant and grave in conversation. Many have seen him weep; none remember that he ever laughed: his body is straight and well proportioned: his hands and arms most delectable to behold: in speaking he is very temperate, modest, and wise; in short, he is a man, for his singular beauty, surpassing the children of men."

* B. 7, c. 18.

† See Nat. Alexander, sec. 2, disser. 8; Francis Vavasor *de Forma Christi*; and Calmet's dissertation on the same subject.

* Rom. viii. 29.

† Gal. ii. 20.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE STATUE ERECTED TO CHRIST IN THE CITY OF PANEAS, OR CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

WE have seen* how a woman who had been diseased with an unnatural flux of blood for twelve years, was miraculously cured by touching only the hem of our Saviour's garment. In return for so great a favor, she is said to have erected at Paneas, where she lived, two brass statues, one of Christ, the other of herself, in order thus to hand down to posterity the memory of so signal an event, as well as to testify her gratitude to her divine Benefactor. Eusebius† relates this as highly deserving of credit, and says that he has seen these statues with his own eyes. His account is: "that by the gate of this woman's house was erected a brass statue, bearing the effigy of a woman upon her knees, in the posture of a suppliant; that opposite to her there stood the effigy of a man in brass, intended for our Saviour, stretching out his hand to the woman; that at the foot of this statue an unknown plant was said to spring up, which reaching to the border of his garment, became an effectual remedy against diseases. Nor is it extraordinary," adds the historian, "that Gentiles should have done this to our Saviour, in return for so signal a benefit, because it was usual with them indiscriminately to bestow these honors upon all those to whom they were indebted for extraordinary favors." St. Asterius likewise, who wrote about the year 400, mentions this brazen statue, erected in honor of Christ, which, he says, *remained for many years*, in order to silence and confute those who should dare to give the lie to the evangelists. Moreover, Rufinus,* Philostorgius,† Zozomen,‡ etc.,§ make mention of this same statue, which continued at Paneas till the year of Christ 362, when, as Sozomen relates, Julian the Apostate removed it, and in its place substituted his *own*.

I am not ignorant that this account, apparently so well authenticated, is rejected by some authors, especially by those who are enemies to sacred images.‖ They pretend that it is con-

* Chap, xxxv.

† Euseb. lib. 7, Hist. Eccl. c. 18.

* Lib. 7, c. 14.

† Lib. 7, c. 3.

‡ Lib. 5, c. 21.

§ See Sandinus, c. 18. p. 254, Hist. Fam. Sacræ,

‖ To obviate the misrepresentations of the ignorant or malevolent, we shall here state the doctrine of the Catholic Church respecting holy images, as declared by the council of Trent, sess. 25:—

"The images of Christ and of his Virgin Mother, and of other saints, are to be had and retained, especially in churches, and a due honor and veneration are to be given them; not that *any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them*, for which they are to be honored, or that *any prayer is to be made to them*, or that *any confidence is to be placed in them*, as was formerly done by the heathens who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor which is given them is referred to the originals which they represent; so that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads or kneel, we adore Christ, and venerate his saints whose likeness they represent."

Notwithstanding this explicit declaration, Archbishop Seck

trary to the gospel, which represents the woman as having expended all she had, and therefore they infer that she must have been totally unable to erect two such costly statues. But the obvious sense of the sacred text does not imply that she had absolutely reduced herself to beggary, but only that she had been at a very considerable expense in consulting physicians, and all to no purpose. Besides, supposing this to have been the case, she might, after the recovery of her health, restore her shattered fortune, and acquire wealth for such an undertaking. Moreover, if she herself were unable, some of her relatives or friends in the town might possibly have assisted her in a work of this kind, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of so miraculous an event. Another objection brought forward against this account is, that the Jews and Gentiles, both bitter enemies to Christianity, would not have allowed this statue of Christ to have so long remained as a monument against themselves. But perhaps the persecutors might not know this to be the image of Christ; certain it is, that the Almighty, if he had pleased to preserve so illustrious a monument in confirmation of the truth, could easily have diverted their attention from destroying it: and therefore, according to the rules of sound criticism, the express and positive testimony of Eusebius, and of so many other ancient authors, ought not to be set aside by merely *negative* arguments.

er has thought fit to renew against the Catholic Church the odious and antiquated charge of idolatry, "If any excuses or distinctions," says he, "will acquit the Papists of transgressing it, the commandment against idolatry, the same will acquit the ancient Jews and heathen also," Lecture 19: On the Catechism. But I appeal to the impartial reader, whether every part of the above-mentioned Trent declaration does not manifestly discriminate Catholics from heathens: the latter believed a divine virtue in their idols, placed their hope in them, prayed and offered sacrifice to them; all this Catholics consider as expressly forbidden, with respect to *holy images*, and ascribe to them no other virtue but that of exciting in us the remembrance of those they represent. Although the first reformers, to justify their schismatical separation from the Catholic Church, accused her of idolatry, yet this injurious charge is now abandoned by moderate Protestants as ill founded, and directly contrary to the principles of Catholics. For what is idolatry but giving divine honor and service to an idol or false god? and is not this idol-worship as much condemned by Catholics as by Protestants? We acknowledge ONE ONLY true and living God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: to him ALONE do we offer sacrifice, or any other divine honors: him ALONE we profess to adore in spirit and truth: whatever else we religiously honor, either in heaven or on earth, we honor it for his sake, and for the relation it has to him: and so far are we from encouraging idolatry, that history proves that it has been, in a great measure, banished out of the world by the labors and preaching of the Catholic Church alone. As to the images of Christ and his saints, Protestants themselves agree with us, that they may be properly used for the instruction of the ignorant, and the exciting of devotion. See Bishop Montague's "Gagger," p. 300, and p. 318, where he says: "The pictures of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and saints, may be made, had in houses, set up in churches; the Protestants use them, they despise them not; respect and honor may be given them; the Protestants do it, and use them for helps of devotion." In reality, as conjugal love makes a man not only love his wife, but also her picture; as the respect and honor we have for our king, makes us *respect* and honor the presence chamber and chair of state; as the love we have for God, makes us love his *house*, his *altar*, and other things belonging to his service; so in like manner, the love, respect, and honor we have for Christ, make us respect and honor his pictures as representing him to us, and the cross as the memorial of his sufferings. Moreover, it will be impossible for Protestants to clear themselves of idolatry, in showing honor and respect to the *name* of Jesus, to the *gospel*, etc., if they rank us with heathen for showing the same kind of honor and respect to holy images. Is not the sacred name of Jesus, when pronounced, the same to the ear that the image is to the eye? Therefore, whatever reverence is given to the one, may as lawfully be given to the other.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE MIRACULOUS LIKENESSES OR PRINTS OF CHRIST.

There are three of these portraits which claim our attention. The *first* is that which Christ is said to have sent to Abgar, King of Edessa, who was very desirous of seeing him. The *second* is the print of the holy face, called Veronica. The *third* is the *holy linen* which served at his burial, and which exhibits the image of one lying in the sepulchre. These three are not by all confirmed as genuine, though the arguments in their favor seem to be of considerable weight. For respecting the *first*, there is mention made of the print, sent by Christ to Abgar, in the Acts of Samona and Guria, martyrs of Edessa, which were written an. 306, not long after their death, and are approved of by Baillet. Again, Evagrius* makes mention of this image from Procopius, a writer of the sixth age, and calls it *theoteukton*, that is, *made by God*. Nicephorus Callistus,† although younger than Evagrius, yet seems to refer to a more ancient testimony than that of Procopius, viz. *the records and archives of the city of Edessa*. In the beginning of the seventh age, there is mention made of this same image by Theophilactus Simocatta,‡ and at the beginning of the eighth, by St. John Damascen and Gregory II. At the conclusion of that century, Adrian I,* and the second council of Nice, being the seventh general council, allege the testimony of this same image to refute the Iconoclasts. In the following age, Haymo, Bishop of Halberstadt,† after mentioning the letter of Abgar to our Lord, adds, that the latter returned him an answer, and with it his print or image. To these may be added many Greek authors of note, such as George Cedrenus, Michael Glycas, Photius, Zonara, John Caropolata, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and others, adduced by Gretzer, and by Austin Calcagninus, in his "Historical Observations on the Image of Edessa." The testimony of so great a number of vouchers seems justly entitled to some degree of credit It is true, that all these writers do not agree as to the origin of this print or likeness, as Constantine Porphyrogenitus observes in speaking of its translation to Constantinople: but they agree at least as to the substance of the history, acknowledging that Christ miraculously imprinted the form of

* Lib. 4, Hist. Eccles. c. 27.
† Lib. 2, c. 7.
‡ Lib. 2, Hist. c. 3.

* In Ep. ad Carol Magnem pro Synodo Nicona II. apue Labbe, tom 7,—"Quod si faciem meam corporaliter cernerd flupis, en tibi vultus mei speciem transformatum in linteo dirigo, per quam et desiderii tui fervorem refrigeres, et quod de me audisti, impossibile nequa quam fieri exist mes."
† Lib. 2, c. 5

his face on a piece of linen, and sent it to Abgar. They differ as to certain circumstances and as to the precise time; but with regard to the fact itself. it matters little whether it was done sooner or later.*

The principal argument adduced by those who reject this impression of Christ, is the silence of Eusebius, who, in speaking of Christ's letter† to Abgar takes no notice of this famous image. But in answer to this, it must be observed, that the silence of one or two writers concerning a particular fact, is not sufficient to set aside the express testimony of many others who admit it. Besides, a reason may be assigned why Eusebius did not speak of this image of Christ at Edessa; for it is well known that Eusebius was an Arian, and one of those who maintained what was afterwards defended by Eutiches with greater violence, that the flesh of Christ was transformed into the divinity; and that therefore it was not to be described, or delineated by any image or representation. This was observed of him by the deacon Epiphanius;‡ and it likewise appears from the letter of Eusebius himself to Constantia, the wife of the emperor Licinius; for when this empress requested of him that he would send her the image of Christ our Saviour, he answered, that her request could not be complied with; for though Christ had two natures, viz. his divine and human nature, yet neither of them could be represented by any image: not his divine nature, which no one can conceive in mind, and much less express with a pencil: not his human nature, the mortality of which was totally absorbed by the glory of the divinity.*

But Eusebius, it may be said, makes mention of the statue erected to Christ at Paneas by the woman cured of a bloody flux. True; but he does this in such a manner as to show that he was averse to the images of Christ; for he says that this woman was a Gentile, and that what she did on this occasion, was after the manner and example of the Gentiles.

But to pursue the history of this image or likeness: it is said, that after Abgar had received it from Christ with all the honor which so great a present deserved, he ornamented it with gold, and placed it over the gate of the city, that it might thus be exposed to the public view and veneration of all, with this inscription engraved on a golden label: "Christ God, he who hopes in thee, will not be confounded." This monument remained at Edessa till the 944th year of Christ, when it was removed by the emperor Constantine VIII. and translated to Constantinople, where it was placed in the temple of Phares, says Constantine Porphyrogenitus, for *the glory of the faithful*, for *the defence of the emperors*, and *the safe guard of the whole city and of the Christian world.* The day of this translation, which was the 16th of August, was yearly celebrated by the Greeks, as appears from their menology: at last, by the singular providence of God, this sacred image was brought to Rome, the seat and centre of the Christian

* See this account of Constantine Porphyrogenitus in Surius, the 15th of Aug.

† Lib. i. Hist. c. 13.

‡ Act. 6, of the council of Nice.

* See Lab. t. 6; Conc. p. 494; and Harduin, t. 4, p. 406

religion where it is still preserved in the church of St. Sylvester, says Baronius, ad. an. 994, who, however, does not mention the time nor occasion of this translation. Austin Justinianus* relates, that it was brought into Italy by Leonardus of Montaldus, Duke of Genoa; it being given him as a present by the emperor of Constantinople.†

Second, as to the print of the *holy face* of our Saviour, called *Veronica:* it is a pious tradition, says Benedict XIV., that a devout woman wiped with her handkerchief his divine face, covered with sweat and blood, when, in his way to Mount Calvary, he fainted under the load of his cross; and that Christ impressed on it the image of his sacred face. According to Mabillon, Tillemont, Papebroc, and Nat. Alexander, it was called Veronica, or true image of our Lord's face, from *vera*, and *iconica*, a word used by St. Gregory of Tours,‡ for an image, and which is derived from the Greek word *eikon* and it is highly probable that this same name, *Veronica*, was given to the devout woman who presented this linen cloth to our Redeemer. Her former name, according to Baronius, was Berenice.

This print of our Lord's face, which is supposed to be the truest representation of him, is mentioned by St. Methodius,§ Bishop of Tyre, as may be seen in Marianus Scotus,‖ likewise by Peter, a monk of Cassino, who died an. 1140, in his MS. book of the holy places,* also by Matthew of Westminster,† under Inn. III. who died in 1216. The testimonies of other writers and popes may be seen in Gretzer, c. 17; Augustin Calcagninus, and Berti.‡ The arguments of Serry,§ and others who reject this relic, are merely *negative*, and ought not to invalidate the positive testimonies of so many respectable writers in its favor.‖ This print of the holy face was translated to Rome in the time of the emperor Tiberius, as mentioned by Peter, a monk of Cassius,¶ and in a MS. history of this translation preserved in the Vatican library; and it is still kept in St. Peter's church with singular veneration, A copy of it was sent to the Cistercian nunnery at Montreuil, as a present by Urban IV. to his sister, being a nun there. See his Letter to them in Chifflet, "De Linteis Sepulchralibus," c. 34, where he thus writes: "Wherefore, we beseech you, that out of respect to him whom it represents, you will receive it as the true Veronica, or his true image and portrait. This letter was dated 1249.

3. THE SACRED SINDON, OR LINEN CLOTH, MADE USE OF IN THE BURIAL OF OUR SAVIOUR.

It was customary with the Jews to bury the dead in linen with winding-bands. This appears from the history of Lazarus, given by St. John, c. xi. 44. *He that had been dead, came forth*

* Lib 4. Annal. Reip. Genuens. ad. an. 1384.
† See Sandinus.
‡ Vit. Patr. c. 12.
§ See this testimony of St. Methodius, defended by Sandinus against Serry, etc. p. 268.
‖ Lib. 2. Chronic, ad. an. Christi 39.

* Apud Mabillon, t. 1. Musei Italica.
† Flores Hist.
‡ T. 5, de Thealogicis Disciplinis.
§ This author is mistaken, where he says that Marianus Scotus was the first who gave this history in his Chronicle; for it is mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who lived a whole century before.
‖ See Bollandus, 4th of February.
¶ Apud Mabillon, t. i. Mus. Italica

bound feet and hands with winding-bands and his face tied with a napkin. Josephus of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, buried our Lord in the same manner, as appears from chap. cxliv. Hence Peter, after Christ's resurrection, entering the sepulchre, saw the *linen cloths* lying, and the napkin that had been about his head.* Wherefore the sindon, or linen cloth, in which our Lord's body was wrapped, exhibits the image of the same body, impressed partly in blood, partly in the liquor of the spices and perfumes with which it was anointed. The linen appears to be thick and coarse, and is said to be twelve feet long and three broad. It was so spread under the body of Christ as to cover it entirely from head to foot. It was long kept at Jerusalem, and was brought from thence to Chambery, in Savoy, and placed in a chapel magnificently adorned, from whence it was translated to Turin,* where it is still preserved with great veneration. That it is the very same linen cloth which served at our Lord's funeral is affirmed by several popes, mentioned by Sandinus in his "History of the Sacred Family," p. 276.†

* John xx. 6. 7.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE WRITINGS AND REMARKABLE SAYINGS OF JESUS CHRIST.

WHEN our blessed Lord appeared on earth to teach mankind the truth of salvation, he was pleased to do this only by word of mouth. As he himself did not commit to writing any part of his divine doctrine, so neither does he appear to have left any injunction of this kind to his apostles: they seem not to have entertained the most distant idea of drawing up in writing a complete body of sacred doctrine to be delivered down to posterity as the *only* rule of faith. It is a fact perfectly well known, that the gospels were not penned during the lifetime of Christ, but a considerable time afterwards, and on different occasions, as the particular necessities of certain churches or of individuals seemed to require. The gospel was generally preached; and numerous churches were founded before any *writing* whatever of the New Testament made its appearance among the faithful. Even St. Matthew, the first of the evangelists, did not *write* till he had for some years *preached* the gospel in Judea, after the ascension of Christ. Being about to depart from thence to plant Christianity in foreign nations,‡ he undertook about the year 41 or 42,§ to write his gospel, to satisfy those converts of Palestine whom he had first brought over by his preaching

* This translation took place an. 1578, by order of the Duke Emmanuel Philibert. For understanding that St. Charles Borromæus had resolved to go on foot to Chambery in honor of this relic, he ordered it to be brought to Turin to save him so fatiguing a journey. See this saint's life by Peter Giussano, a priest of the congregation of the Oblates at Milan, lib. 5, c. 5.

† See Chifflet, "de Lentus Sepul.;" and Ben. xiv. lib.4. de Canonix. SS. part 2, c. 30, note 14.

‡ See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 3, c. 24.

§ According to Dr. Lardner, St. Matthew did not write his Gospel till about the year 64; but the learned Michaelis inclines to think about the year 41, in which he is supported by Eusebius.

to the Christian faith. This circumstance is worthy of remark, and deserves the particular attention of all sincere Protestants, because it evinces,

1. That when Christianity began, the holy scripture was NOT the *sole* and *only* rule of Christian faith, as sectarists would pretend.*

2. It evinces that before the gospels were written, the first Christians had already a true and saving faith, and not only those who received it by the mouth of infallible directors, such as Christ and his apostles; but also those who received it by that of private, and, in their *own* capacity, fallible pastors and teachers: such as the deacons might be,* Philip,† Ananias,‡ Barnabas, and innumerable others. Moreover, it does not appear that even the apostles themselves were infallible guides during the mortal life of their divine Master.

3. The above observation proves, that a certain true and saving faith may be effectually conveyed to others by *tradition*, though each individual pastor be not infallible. For what was actually the case in the beginning of the Church with regard to many Christians, must surely be admitted as *still possible;* nay, it is still the condition of most young people in Christendom, who are generally instructed in the most necessary points of Christianity before they read or know anything of the Bible. If it be asked, what *infallible rule* of their belief can these children have? I answer, the very same which the first Christians had when converted by the preaching of St. Philip, St. Stephen and the other disciples; that is, they have the same doctrine for their rule which Christ delivered by word of mouth, and confirmed by miracles: for this being truly and credibly related to them, secures their faith, and is an infallible rule of it.

The reader, it is hoped, will excuse this digression, which, in a religious view, is highly important. To return

* The important question respecting the definition of the *rule of faith*, is frequently misrepresented by Protestants, The *main* point of dispute is not, whether Christians are to ground their faith immediately on the word of God as principally contained in holy scripture; for this is equally admitted both by Catholics and Protestants; but it is, which is the most assured and certain means of ascertaining the true sense of God's word? that is, whether it be more rational for each individual to follow his *own private* interpretation of the Scripture, as Protestants affirm, or to be guided by the judgment of the universal Church, as is the practice of Catholics. This great and fundamental question of controversy is easily decided. For if the scripture had not manifestly referred us to the pastors of the Church, and required our submission to them, does not common sense revolt at the idea of an individual setting up his own private judgment in opposition to that of the most learned and illustrious society upon earth? Whoever, in controverted points, rejects the authority of this numerous and respectable society, deriving a lawful mission and continual succession from the apostles; warded on every side with the writings of the holy fathers, as with a thousand bucklers and shields of mighty men; with many thousands of martyrs, and with unquestionable miracles,—to follow his own private judgment,—such a person may have an *opinion* that his faith is right, but no certainty whatever. Nay, he cannot reasonably even think he is right; for those who follow their own interpretation as their rule, are perpetually disagreeing among themselves, and giving the most contrary and even contradictory interpretation to the same text. The very same persons not unfrequently alter their opinion about the sense they put on scripture; and what they believe to be the true sense to-day, they reject as false to-morrow, being continually *carried about with every wind of doctrine.* Hence, Bishop Beveridge, one of the most learned and distinguished prelates of the church of England, adverting to what St. Peter says [2 Peter ii. 1] of the destuctive nature of *heresy*, declares that it strikes him with fear and apprehension, "lest," says he, "through the *weakness of my own judgment*, and the *deceits of my own heart, prompted by the secret workings of the prince of darkness*, myself should be betrayed into such *damnable heresies* which have swift destuction attending them:" Thesaurus, Theologius, ver. 4, p. 288. With this uncertainty of the Protestants compare the happy security of the Catholics, who adhere to that Church which is the *pillar and ground of truth;* who follow those pastors whom Christ has left as guides, that *we may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine;* and whom he promised to assist with his holy Spirit to the end of the world.

* Acts vi. 5.
† Acts viii. 35.
‡ Acts ix. 10.

to Christ: although it must be allowed that he left no account *in writing*, either of his own sacred life, or of his divine doctrine, yet this by no means implies, that he never wrote occasionally in answer to the queries of particular persons. Accordingly we find that many judicious critics consider as genuine, the letter which our Lord is said to have returned to Abgar, King of Edessa. This prince, according to the records kept in the church of Edessa, had written to Christ to invite him into his kingdom, with the view of being cured by him of a distemper, which is thought by Procopius to have been the gout. Jesus, whose personal mission was confined to Judea, did not comply with this king's request, but is said to have written the following letter:—

"Blessed art thou, Abgarus, for believing in me, without having seen me. For it is written of me, that they who shall have seen me, would not believe in me, and that those who shall not have seen me, would believe and so receive life. As to thy request that I would come and see thee, these are to acquaint thee, that I must accomplish here all things for which I am sent, and then return to him who sent me. But when I am departed, I will send one of my disciples to thee, that he may heal thee of thy disorder, and give life to thee and to them that are with thee.

Eusebius* tells us, that he transcribed this letter, and the whole account, from the public records of the city of Edessa: Count Darius makes mention of it in a letter to St. Austin: St. Ephrem,† Deacon of Edessa, and who probably never saw the history of Eusebius, cites this epistle as universally received; Procopius, Evagrius, St. John Damascen, and innumerable others admit its authenticity.*

Some modern Deists have made it a question, whether our Saviour was able either to read or write. But in this they discover only their gross ignorance of the sacred history, which expressly mentions that Christ *wrote*† twice on the ground.‡

Another proof of Christ's ability to read, occurs in Luke iv. 6, which likewise proves that he knew Hebrew, at that time a learned language among the Jews. as the Latin is among us. For then, as at present, the Jews were accustomed to read the sacred scriptures in the Hebrew only, and afterwards explained them in the vulgar tongue, which was Syriac or Syro-Chaldee.

As to the remarkable sayings of Christ, besides those already mentioned in the gospels, there is only one to be found in the other parts of the New Testament, which is cited by St. Paul in the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, verse 35, *It is more blessed to give than to receive;* the meaning of which is sufficiently obvious: for, to give is a proof of abundance; to receive, is an argument of want: to

* Hist. lib. i. c. 13, p. 36, ed. Cantab.

† St. Ephrem. in Testam. t. 2, p. 235, ed. Vatic.

* Among the moderns, Tillemont, Reading, Jos. Simon Assemani, Grabe, Mamachi, Baronius, &c. But, on the other side, Erasmus, Coster, Melchior, Cano, Bellarmine, Du Pin, Nat. Alexander, Rivet, Hornbeck, the younger Spanheim, etc., reject it as counterfeit.

† What he wrote on this occasion is impossible to ascertain; perhaps, says St. Ambrose, the following sentence, or at least to the same effect: "Why dost thou see a mote in thy brother's eye, and not perceive the beam in thine own?" Others conjecture differently.

‡ See John, c. 8.

give is to imitate God's goodness and liberality, who gives to all, and in return receives nothing. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, mentions some words of Christ relating to the institution of the blessed eucharist, which are not recorded in the Evangelists. We shall not speak here of the words which were addressed from heaven to St. Paul at his conversion, and to St. John in the Apocalypse.

The following sentences are by the holy fathers attributed likewise to Christ our Lord; "If you should be gathered together in my bosom, and yet refuse to do what I command, I will cast you off, and say to you: Begone from me, I know not whence you are, ye workers of iniquity."* St. Irenæus ascribes to Jesus the following words, without explaining them; "I have often desired to hear these discourses, but no person was at hand to recite them."† "In whatever things I shall find you engaged at my coming, for the same will I judge you."* "Ask for such things as are great,† and little things shall be given you." "I have been infirm for the sake of the infirm, I have been hungry for the sake of the hungry, and for the thirsty have I suffered thirst."‡ "Be good bankers,"§ to signify that we ought as carefully to discern truth from falsehood, as bankers do gold from base metal.

We meet with other sayings of our divine Redeeemer in ancient apocryphal gospels, which may, perhaps, have been handed down by those who received them from his sacred mouth;‖ but they are far from having the same authority with such as are found in the canonical scriptures, which alone are sanctioned by the Church as divinely inspired, and which have been carefully preserved by tradition and transmitted down to the present time through a lapse of eighteen hundred years.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE TESTIMONIES GIVEN BY PROFANE WRITERS TO THE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST.¶

HOWEVER wonderful and miraculous the history of Jesus may appear, there are many reasons, says Mr. Addison, why we are not to expect that the particulars of it should be noticed by those eminent pagan writers who were his contemporaries.‡ Supposing the things relating to Christ be ever so true, they would not naturally gain credit with the heathen world, before the report

* St. Clement, Ep. 2, ad Cor., c. 4.

† St. Irenæus, adversus Hæreses, c. 7.

‡ This silence in the heathen writers concerning Christ, is ascribed by Sulpicius Severus to a particular and superior disposition of Divine Providence. "Let it not seem strange," says he, "that the facts contained in holy writ, are not mentioned by profane writers: a superior disposition of Providence overruled here, that this history might receive no alteration from corrupt man, and such as advance indifferently both truth and falsehood, but be confined within its own mysteries; for being separated from worldly concerns, and not to be treated but with awe and reverence, it ought to have nothing common with other writings. And, indeed, it would have been the highest indignity, that these sacred matters should only have served as an occasional subject to writers, who were bent on other views and other pursuits:"—Hist. Sac. lib. 2.

* St. Justin, in Dial. cum Tryphone, sec. 47.

† St. Clement of Alex., li. 1, Storm.

‡ Origin, Comment. in Matt. § St. Jerom.

‖ See a collection of these in Grabe, t. 1; Spicelegi, p. 25; and in Fabricius, Cod. Apocri. N. Testa. part. 1.

¶ See on this subject Bullet's "Histoire de l'Etablissment du Christianisme, tiree des souls auteurs Juifs et Paiens;"

of them had been examined and duly ascertained by judicious persons, who by considering the several circumstances, attestations, and characters of those concerned in them, might prudently determine how far they were deserving of belief. Besides, the Jews were branded not only for superstitions different from all the religions of the pagan world, but in a particular manner ridiculed for being a credulous people; so that all accounts of miracles, performed in that country, were by persons of sense and learning deemed false and frivolous. We may further observe, that the ordinary practice of magic in those times, with the many pretended prodigies, divinations, apparitions, and local miracles among the heathens, would render them less attentive to such reports from Judea, till they had time to weigh the nature, the occasion, and the end of our Saviour's miracles, and were awakened by many surprising events to investigate matters of such a wonderful nature. We are indeed told by St. Matthew, that the fame of our Saviour, during his life, went through all Syria, and that there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, Judea, Decapolis, Idumea, from beyond the Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. Now had there been any historians of those times and places, we might reasonably have expected to have seen in them some account of those wonderful transactions in Judea; but their is not extant a single author of that age, who lived in any of those countries. How many books have perished in which possibly there might have been mention of our Saviour! Look among the Romans, how few of their writings are come down to our times! In the space of two years from our Saviour's birth, when there was such a multitude of writers of every description, how small is the number of authors that have made their way to the present age! One authentic record, and that the most authentic *heathen* record, we are pretty sure is lost. I mean the account sent by the Governor of Judea, under whom our Saviour was judged, condemned, and crucified. For it was the custom, as Eusebius observes, in the Roman empire, as it is to this day in all the governments of the world, to require from the prefects and viceroys of distant provinces a summary relation of every thing remarkable in their administration. That Pontius Pilate, in his account, would have touched on so extraordinary an event in Judea is not to be doubted, and that he actually did so we learn from St. Justin Martyr, who lived about one hundred years after our Saviour's death, and resided, made converts, and suffered martyrdom at Rome. There he disputed with philosophers, and particularly with Crescens the Cynic, who could easily have detected, and would not fail to have exposed him, had he quoted a record not in being, or made from it any false citation. Would this great apologist have challenged Crescens to dispute the cause of Christianity before the Roman senate, had he forged such an evidence? or would Crescens have refused the challenge, could he have triumphed over him in the detection of such a forgery? To

also Lardner, "On Jewish and Heathen testimonies;" and Addison's "Evidences of the Christian Religion."

which we must add, that the apology which appeals to this record, was presented to a learned emperor and to the whole body of the Roman senate. This father, in his apology, speaking of the death and sufferings of our Saviour, refers the emperor for the truth of what he says, to the Acts of Pontius Pilate, which I have here mentioned. Tertullian, who wrote his apology about fifty years after St. Justin, doubtless referred to the same record, when he tells the Governor of Rome, that the emperor Tiberius, having received an account out of Syria of the divine person who had appeared in that country, paid him a particular regard, and threatened to punish any who should accuse the Christians; nay, that the emperor would have adopted him among the deities whom they worshipped, had not the senate refused to come into his proposal. Tertullian, who gives us this history, was not only one of the most learned men of his age, but what adds greater weight to his authority, was eminently skilful and well read in the laws of the Roman empire. Nor can it be said, that Tertullian grounded his quotation upon the authority of St. Justin, because he mixes with it matters of fact which are not related by that author. As for the Acts of Pilate now extant, they are rejected as spurious by the learned, though there had not once been a true and authentic record of this nature, they probably never would have been forged. So far Mr. Addison.

Before we proceed to the *undoubted* authorities extant in pagan writers, let us first consider the celebrated testimony of Josephus concerning Christ which occurs in the eighteenth book of his Antiquities, chap. 4, and is as follows: "At the same time there appeared in Judea an extraordinary person called Jesus, if it be lawful to call him a man. He was a famous worker of miracles, a teacher of those who were desirous of receiving the truth in simplicity, and brought over to him many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. This was* the Christ, whom Pilate, at the accusation of the princes and great men of the nation, delivered up to the ignominious punishment of the cross, notwithstanding which those who first loved him, did not forsake him. He appeared to them alive again the third day after his crucifixion, which the divine prophets had foretold, together with numberless other wonders concerning him. And thence, to this day, there is a set of people, who bear, from him, the name of Christians, as owning him for their Head, Lord, and Master." This testimony is urged by Eusebius† against the Jews and Gentiles, and was admitted as genuine by St. Jerom, Rufinus, and other ecclesiastical writers till the sixteenth cen-

* *Ho kristos houtos en, credebatur* esse Christus: juxta interpretationem St. Hier.: he was *believed* to be Christ. But this difference is immaterial, as Tillemont observes, p. 585, for since Josephus allows that he was foretold by the prophets, (which he does even in the Latin version of this father,) he ought necessarily to have believed him to be the Messiah. I shall not dwell on the testimony which was borne to our Lord's character during his life by his enemies the Jews. Numberless instances of their favorable concessions have already appeared in the course of the evangelical history. Even when they absurdly and blasphemously ascribed his miracles to Satan, by that very calumny of resolving them into the power of a superior evil being, they admitted their reality and greatness. When the later Jews attribute our Lord's miracles to his stealth of a secret name deposited in the temple, or to magical arts brought out of Egypt, they grant that miracles were actually wrought by him. As to the perverse interpretation which they put on them, the vanity and emptiness of it has been already exposed by Christ himself. Sect. 49.

† Dem. Ev. Lib. 3, c 5.

tury. Blondel was one of the first who called in question its authenticity, and he has been followed by Tanquil, Faber, Capel, Osiander, Montacutius, Gifanius, Lardner, and others; whose reasons however are rather conjectures than proofs, as Valois has observed. Its authenticity is defended by Huet, Valois, Natalis Alexander, Pagi, Baronius, Bellarmine, Tillemont, Ceillier, Cave, Usher, Grotius, and other eminent critics, who are supported by the authority of the ancients, as may be seen in Maynard's Josephus, p. 533. See also Bryant's *Vindiciae Flavianae*, and Dr. Forster's dissertation on this subject. Certain it is that all the manuscript copies of Josephus contain the passage in question; nor do we discover that any ancient author, from Josephus to Gifanius, suspected it to be an interpolation, or esteemed it any otherwise than as an authority truly certain and undeniable. To this must be added the advantageous testimonies which Josephus has left concerning John the Baptist* and St. James;† from hence it is probable that he would also bear favorable testimony to Christ their head and leader. Baronius also takes notice of a manuscript translation of Josephus, in Hebrew, kept at Rome, which was consulted with the view of ascertaining the authenticity of this passage; but it had been manifestly erased out of it, doubtless by the Jews, as bearing too hard on that incredulous nation.* In confirmation of this, we may remark, that the Jews have ever shown a marked contempt for this historian, though indisputably the best they have had, if we except the sacred penmen. For a solution of the difficulties brought against this passage see Huet, Dem. Evang., prop. 3. The chief objection is, that this encomium upon the character and miracles of Christ is so extraordinary, that Josephus must have been a Christian to write in this manner. This mode of argumentation, however, is not very conclusive. It is the love of truth and not the mere knowledge of it which constitutes a Christian. By a similar way of reasoning it may possibly be denied hereafter, that Rousseau composed the beautiful eulogium† which he has left us of Jesus Christ and his gospel. The inconsistency of Josephus is not more striking than

* Jos., Ant., lib. 18, c. 7. Blondel affects to doubt the authenticity of this passage, but offers no solid reason whatever against it.

† Lib. 20, c. 8. This passage of Josephus, in which he mentions Christ as a well-known character, has never yet been disputed. Speaking of St. James the Just, he says, that he was the brother *tou legomenou kristou, of him that was called Christ.* Indeed that there formerly flourished in Judea an extraordinary person called Jesus Christ is a fact better supported and authenticated than that there lived such men as Cyrus, Alexander, and Julius Cæsar: for there remain fewer historical monuments to attest the existence of the latter than of the former. As certainly as Christianity is now existing in the world, so certainly did its Founder and Publisher some time exist. The public monuments which the renowned heroes of antiquity left behind, are long since perished, the magnificent palaces they have built, the superb structures they reared, the grand temples and mausoleums they erected, are now no more. Few remaining visible traces are left of the battles they fought, of the empires they established, of the laws they enacted, and of the universal devastation which they once spread around them. But of Jesus Christ and of that spiritual empire of religion which he founded, there remain the most striking memorials in every republic and kingdom of Europe. The religious institutions universally regarded, the religious solemnities universally celebrated, necessarily imply a cause and reason to which they owe their origin, and suppose a date from which they commenced. All national usages are public monuments of facts; they are standing proofs through all successive times, that the persons whose memory they embalm once actually existed. The custom universally observed of solemnizing the nativity, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, is alone sufficient to prove that there existed such a personage, who gave his name to a new society, from him denominated *Christians.*

* See Ittigus Prolegum.; and Cave's Historia Lit. vol. 2

† See the introduction of this work, pp. 39, 40.

that of the philosopher of Geneva. Did we accurately know the religious principles of Josephus, the present difficulty might perhaps be easily solved. It is well known that this historian referred to the emperor Vespasian what the prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah. Since he was able to reconcile so profane an idea with the exterior profession of the Jewish religion why might he not believe the truth of Christ's miracles, and even of his resurrection, without having the courage to declare himself a follower of his persecuted religion? With too much sincerity to disavow the truth of what he perfectly knew to be matter of fact he seems to have been one of those worldly politicians, who, as the gospel says, *love the glory of men more than the glory of God.* The matter, however, is immaterial; for in the supposition that the passage in question is not from the pen of Josephus, his very silence, will prove equally favorable to the cause of Jesus Christ as the above testimony. For admitting that the Jewish historian never touches on Jesus Christ and his miracles, such silence must certainly be deemed very extraordinary. Whether the history of Christ's miracles be true or false, certain it is, that in those times of which Josephus has left us a detailed narrative, there existed at Jerusalem a man who made a considerable noise during his life, and who, after his death, gave his name to a sect or society which was established on the ruins of the Mosaic law. At the time we are speaking of, Christ and his followers were so well known as to attract the notice even of the *heathen* historians; for both Suetonius and Tacitus make mention of them in their histories of the Roman empire. What reason then can be assigned why Josephus, who wrote a particular history of the *Jews*, should not speak of so celebrated a personage as Jesus Christ, who was born, who lived, and died in Judea, and whose doctrine produced there a shock which then began to be felt at Rome itself, and in every part of the empire? While Josephus carefully enumerates so many false Messiahs, whose sectaries were immediately crushed, how comes it, that he says nothing of Jesus Christ, who had first assumed that quality and whose pretensions, supported by a growing party, had even then excited the most alarming sensations for the religion of the country? Will it be said, that Josephus did not know, or at least that he despised, as fabulous, the accounts which the Christians propagated concerning their Master? The history of Jesus, whether true or false, was too public for Josephus to be ignorant of it; and however fabulous it might have appeared to him, he could not despise it as below his notice, since it was already become the moving principle of an extraordinary revolution. As a Jew, as a priest, as an historian, Josephus was every way obliged to disabuse his contemporaries and posterity; in every point of view he was bound to declare his sentiments, however unfavorable to the character of Jesus. But on the contrary, if, persuaded of the truth of Christ's miracles, he wanted courage to avow his conviction for fear of displeasing the Jews and Romans, in this case, every consideration imperiously dictated the most absolute

silence. With respect to facts, so important and so intimately connected with the history he was writing, the silence of Josephus must appear an affected, interested silence, which therefore speaks as loudly in favor of Jesus as the very testimony in question.

Let us now return to those pagan writers who are allowed to have touched on the history of our Saviour, and we shall find that such facts are mentioned by them as it was reasonable to expect they should know, observe, and transmit to posterity. That Augustus Cæsar *had ordered the whole empire to be censed or taxed*, which brought our Saviour's reputed parents to Bethlehem, is mentioned by several Roman historians, as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion. *That a great light, or a new star appeared in the east*, which directed the wise men to our Saviour, is recorded by Chalcidus in his Commentary on Plato. *That Herod the King of Palestine made a great slaughter of innocent children*, without sparing even his own son, is confirmed by Macrobius. *That our Saviour had been in Egypt* is acknowledged by Celsus,* who pretends that he learned there the arts of magic. Moreover, this philosopher mentions many other circumstances relating to the history of Christ; indeed so many, that an abstract of the Christian history might almost be taken from the very fragments of his book preserved by Origen: nor does he ever pretend to dispute the real existence of our Saviour, or the truth of the facts recorded by the evangelists. Porphyry also, though an inveterate enemy to Christianity, not only allowed the existence of Christ, but honored him as a most wise and pious man, whom the gods had translated into heaven.* What testimony, adds this historian, would you deem more valid and credible than the attestation of an enemy? In this we may admire the providence of God, who has turned the pens of the bitterest enemies of Christianity against themselves, as he formerly obliged Balaam to bless his people, though he went out with the express design of cursing them.† *That many miraculous cures and works out of the ordinary course of nature were wrought by Jesus* is confessed by Hierocles‡ and Julian the Apostate, who lived about the middle of the fourth century. That at the time when our Saviour died, *there was a miraculous darkness and a great earthquake*, is recorded by Phlegon, a pagan, and freedman to Adrian the Emperor. For the truth of this event, Tertullian, in his Apology, refers the Romans to their public registers: "Eum mundi casum in archivis vestris habetis."

Neither Arrian nor Appian speaks

* Celsus lived about A. D. 176.

* Euseb. Dem. Evang. lib. 3.

† Theodoret, de Curan. Græcorum affectibus, lib. 3.

‡ In his work which he composed against the Christians, about A. D. 303, entitled *Philalethes*, in which he repeats the slanders of Celsus and Porphyry, and draws a supposed parallel between the miracles of Christ and the pretended miracles of Apollonius Tyræneus, of which absurd blasphemy Eusebius of Cæsarea published an ample confutation. As to Julian the Apostate, he made use of every expedient to discredit Christianity, and had the advantage of perfectly knowing its doctrine, and whether the philosophers and Jewish or pagan historians could furnish against it, yet he was not able to object anything deserving a serious regard, or that could be considered as a solid apology for his apostacy. St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Cyril, answered his cavils. It is happy for religion, that the objections of this antichristian emperor have been transmitted down to our times: otherwise some of them might have imagined them to be counter evidence for rejecting the gospel history: but nothing more betrays the weakness of infidelity, or strengthens more the cause of Christianity, than the concessions of these early enemies in favor of its authenticity.

of Jesus Christ; nor was it to be expected. The former describes the wars of Alexander, and so by his subject was otherwise engaged: the latter has omitted Judea in the description which he has left of the Roman empire. From the total silence of Plutarch we may infer that he had not the courage to speak well of the Christians, and was unwilling to calumniate them, as St. Austin remarks of Seneca. Ælius Lampridius, in his life of Alexander Severus, writes as follows: "Every morning, when at liberty, he performed his devotions in his oratory, where he kept the principal gods, the greatest heroes, and most holy personages; among whom were Apollonius, *Christ*, Abraham, and Orpheus, together with the images of his ancestors." And, chap. 40, "He had a design of building a temple for Christ, and of enrolling him among the gods, which Adrian is said likewise to have intended, when he gave orders for building in all cities temples without any idols, and which are therefore called Adrian's temples. He did this with the view of dedicating them to Christ, but was prevented by the priests, who remonstrated against it from the apprehension of all becoming Christians, and abandoning the temples of the gods."

Suetonius and Tacitus make mention of Christ and his religion, but in a manner which evinces the inveterate prejudices which they entertained against Christianity. Suetonius, in his Life of Claudius, c. 25, says: "That he expelled from Rome the Jews who, on account of Christ,* raised commotions in that city." The historian here evidently refers to the Christians, who were considered as a branch of the Jews, because the founders and first teachers of Christianity were by birth of that nation.

In Nero's time, which was little more than thirty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, Tacitus, in his annals,* makes mention of the violent death which Christ had suffered; that he flourished under the reign of Tiberius, and that Pilate was then Procurator of Judea. He says there was a "great multitude of Christians" in Rome, and gives a circumstantial and shocking account of the ingenious torments and excruciating deaths to which they were subjected† by Nero, who imputed to them the conflagration at Rome, with the view of vindicating himself. His words are: "Nero, to divert the suspicion of his having set Rome on fire,‡ inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already detested for their crimes. They derive their name and origin

* See Rossal's dissertation, "De Christo per errorem in Chrestum commutato," where he shows, that the heathens often called our Saviour *Chrest* instead of Christ, through mistake, and not by way of reproach.

* Lib. 15, c. 44.

† Multitudo ingens. Pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarem tergis contecti laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammati, atque ubi defecisset, in usum nocturni luminis uterentur.

‡ Tillemont, Crevier, and other judicious critics, make no doubt but Nero himself was the author of this conflagration. Suetonius and Dion Cassius positively charge him with it. Tacitus, indeed, doubts whether the fire was owing to accident or to the wickedness of the prince; but by a circumstance which he mentions, it appears that the flame was at least kept up and allowed to spread for several days by the tyrant's order. It is surprising that Gibbon, in his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. 16, should attempt to vindicate Nero from this imputation, contrary to the testimony of the Roman historians. Hereby he manifestly betrays his partiality in favor of the most execrable tyrant that ever disgraced a throne, and, at the same time, an uncommon prejudice against the professors of Christianity, the innocent victims of that prince's rage.

from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate." It is evident that this historian, so exact and judicious on other occasions, had never been at the pains of examining into the religion of Christians, and therefore he repeats the calumnies which had been disseminated by the people among their enemies. How much more amiable a picture does Pliny give of the purity and sanctity of their manners, in a letter addressed to the emperor Trajan, and written an. 104, that is, within four years after the death of St. John. "It was their custom," says he, "to meet before light, on a stated day, and mutually to recite a hymn to Christ as God,* binding themselves, by a solemn oath, not for the purpose of any thing wicked, but, on the contrary, never to be guilty of any fraud, of any theft, or of any debauchery; never to falsify their word; never to deny a trust, when called upon to deliver it up."† Lib. 10. Epist. 97.

I shall close this article with the following account of the death of Pan, from Plutarch's treatise, de Defectu Oraculorum, especially as Eusebius has transcribed it at full length in one of his principal works. It rests on the authority of Æmilian, professor of eloquence, who, with many others, had heard it from his father Epithersis, an ocular witness of the whole transaction. This Epithersis related, that going, with many others, on board of a ship bound for Italy, when he was near the island of Paxes, one of the Echinades at the entrance of the gulf of Corinth, a voice was heard calling on Thamus, the captain of the ship. Thamus having answered, the voice said to him, that when arrived at Pelodes, which is the port of Buthrotus in Epirus, he was to give notice of the death of the great Pan. This Pan, it is to be observed, was considered as one of the principal heathen deities. Upon hear-

* We have here a strong and convincing testimony against the Socinians and Unitarians. The testimony of a respectable heathen magistrate, a man of sense and learning, and who derived his information not from hearsay, but from the confession of Christians themselves, who had yielded to the violence of the persecution, that the primitive Christians *adored Christ as God*; certainly not a *metaphorical God* which would have been the height of wickedness and absurdity.

† I might here advert to another list of heathen writers, viz. those who were at first heathens, and afterwards became Christians. For their testimonies are certainly to be looked upon equally, if not more authentic, than if they had remained pagans. But for brevity's sake, the reader is referred to Mr. Addison's "Evidences of the Christian religion," section 3, etc. The *external* evidence arising from so many Jewish and heathen testimonies, tends much to illustrate and confirm the truth of the gospel history; but its own *internal* evidence affords the strongest argument in support of Christianity. No evidence, however, is sufficient to convince our modern freethinkers, and the reason is obvious, because they *will not* be convinced. They are, in general, light, easy, self-confident young men, who pursue pleasure more than truth, and seem to have no moral end in view. Persons of this description cannot be supposed to have any predilection for what relates to a spiritual world, or indeed for anything but what concerns the interests and enjoyments of the present life. When we reflect how they live, we may safely conclude that it is not *reason* which they follow, since they live in a perpetual contradiction to the first principles of it, but the gratification of their passions; their incredulity proceeds merely from a spirit of *libertinism*, and a desire of submitting to as few obligations as possible: in other words, it is not so much a *freedom* of *thinking* which they aim at, as a *freedom* of *living*, and of doing what they please, without the control of God's law or the fear of eternal punishment. For the truth of this observation I appeal to experience; for you seldom find a man *loose* in his *principles*, who is not so in his *manners*. There may possibly be now and then an instance of some cold phlegmatic man who sets up for overturning religion, merely for the sake of contradiction, or to get himself a name by it; without the design of indulging his own appetites in so doing; but this is a rare case; such generally being those *who walk after their own lusts*, and have no just claims to excellence either in moral or theological science. "The writings of several of the more distinguished of the modern unbelievers," says Dr. Priestly, "show the spirit with which they write; that, for the most part, their works consist of sarcastic wit, popular declamation, and vague intemperate railing at priests and priestcraft, without any regard to historical truth." See his "Discourses on Revealed Religion," vol. ii. p. 9.

ing this, all on board were filled with consternation, and after some deliberation it was determined that Thamus should give the required notice, in case the wind failed him when opposite to Pelodes. On their arrival there, it being a perfect calm, Thamus cried out to those on the shore, that the great Pan was dead. He no sooner said this, than cries were heard as of a number of persons bitterly lamenting and expressing the utmost astonishment at the event. The passengers arrive at Rome and make public this extraordinary circumstance; Tiberius, the reigning emperor, having heard from Thamus himself the whole account, judged it worthy of credit. Several writers are of opinion, as Baronius observes, that this Pan, so highly honored by the pagans as the great Author of nature, was Jesus Christ himself; his death, they say, was thus lamented by the devils, because it involved the destruction of their empire. This opinion is adopted by Huet,* Gretzer,† Natalis Alex.,‡ and Montactius.§ On the contrary, Tillemont, in his abridged Life of Christ, p. 47, following Eusebius, by the great Pan understands the prince of devils, whose reign and empire were destroyed by the death of Christ; it being, says he, more glorious and triumphant for Jesus Christ that the devil should thus acknowledge himself overthrown, and to have received from the cross a deadly wound. Others again, as Dalus, Honore, etc., doubt the truth of the whole history, which, they say, appears to be of the fabulous kind. Baronius likewise leaves the matter undecided.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE YEARS OF CHRIST.

THERE are three questions respecting the years of Jesus Christ, on the determination of which depends the true meaning of several texts in the gospel and the prophets. The first question regards the year of Christ's birth; the second, that of his baptism; and the third that of his death. These three epochs are intimately connected with each other. If two of them be ascertained, we easily find out the third; and even from the knowledge of one, we may very confidently pronounce of the other two.

It appears that the ancients generally determined the years of Christ by the epoch of his baptism; and the epoch of his baptism by the testimony of St. Luke, concerning the commencement of the mission of St. John the Baptist. From the same evangelist they learned that Jesus was then about the thirtieth year of his age and they concluded that he lived fifteen years under Tiberius, and fifteen under Augustus. They placed the birth of Christ therefore two years before the vulgar era;‖ and as to the year of his death, some made it to coincide with the fifteenth year of

* Prop. 9, Dem. Evang. c. 136, sec. 4.
† Lib. i, de Cruce, c. 33.
‡ In Hist. Eccl., sec. i.
§ T. i. Orig. Eccles., part 2.
‖ The vulgar or common era, whence we date the year Christ's birth, does not begin with the year 4000, but five full years later, and with the first of January following, as

Tiberius, others with the seventeenth, and others with the eighteenth.

Among the moderns, some determine the years of Christ by the epoch of his birth, and this epoch they regulate by the testimony of Josephus, respecting the duration of Herod's reign.* Others† determine the years of Jesus Christ, not solely by the epoch of his birth, but likewise by that of his death. The epoch of his birth they determine by the testimony of Josephus, and the epoch of his death by astronomical calculations, by the testimony of Phlegon the Historian, and by Daniel's prophecy respecting the seventy weeks. Others again compute the years of Christ solely by the epoch of his death, which they determine by astronomical calculations, by the testimony of Phlegon, and the prophecy of Daniel. This is the system of Labbe, Grandani, and others.

Kepler shows: for example, the year which is commonly called 1831 from the birth of Christ, is, in fact, 1836. This mistake was owing to Dionysius Exiguus, who first introduced this era, and who erroneously began it five years after the birth of Christ: but it is now become so general, that it could not be changed without the greatest confusion of all ancient monuments.

* Pezron places the birth of Jesus Christ four years before the vulgar era, his baptism in the twenty-seventh, and his death in the twenty-ninth of the vulgar era. Plumyoen places the birth of Christ two years before the vulgar era, his baptism in the twenty-eighth, and his death in the thirty-first year of the vulgar era. They each of them admit but three Passovers. Decker places the birth of our Saviour four years before the vulgar era, his baptism in the twenty-eighth, and his death in the thirty-first: he admitted four Passovers.

† Usher places the birth of Christ four years before the vulgar era, his baptism in the twenty-seventh, and his death in the thirty-third year of the same epoch. This is agreeable to Lancelot's calculation. Toinare and Calmet place the death of Herod in the third year before the vulgar era, and conclude that the birth of Christ preceded the common era three years and eight days.

After this general view of the various sentiments of ancient and modern chronologists it may perhaps be expected that I should enter into a detailed examination of the several difficulties to which inquiries of this nature are liable; but such chronological discussions would carry me too far, nor could I pretend, without the imputation of vanity, to throw any new light on a subject which has in vain been attempted by men of far superior learning and judgment. The reader may consult the chronological dissertation of Rondet in the *Bible de Vence*. This author attempts to prove, 1. that the death of Christ happened in the thirty-third year of the vulgar era: 2. That his baptism was in the beginning of the thirtieth year of the vulgar era: 3. That his birth was at the conclusion of the year which precedes the first of the vulgar era. In opposition to this system, the reader may examine what the learned Kepler has adduced in a work on this subject, where he says, that he has demonstrated that our Saviour was born full five years before the commencement of the vulgar era. "Demonstratum puto natem esse Jesum Christum cinque solidis annis ante principium æræ hodiernæ." As this opinion of Kepler, though it cannot be perhaps *demonstratively* proved, has nevertheless been considered by many of the learned as extremely well founded, we have adopted it in the present work, as will appear by the following chronological table, taken principally from Sandinus:—

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF OUR SAVIOUR'S LIFE,

CHIEFLY FROM SANDINUS.

Years of the world.	Years of Rome.		Years before Christ.	Yrs. before the V. Era.
3985	733	THE Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the 8th of December.	16	21
3986	734	The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the 8th of September.	15	20
3989	737	Her Presentation in the temple in the third year of her age.	12	17
3997	745	According to Cedrenus, Joachim died, at the age of 80 years, and Ann at the age of 79.	4	9
3999	747	The angel Gabriel announces to Zachary, that his wife Elizabeth will bring forth a son. She conceives after the month of September, ch. ii.	—	7
4000	748	The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, the 25th of March, ch. iii.	—	6
—	—	The Blessed Virgin goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, ch. iv.	—	
—	—	The Nativity of John the Baptist, the 24th of June, ch. v.	Years of Christ.	
—	—	Christ our Lord is born about the year of the world 4000, the 25th of December, in the days of King Herod, and the consulate of C. Lælius Balbus, and C. Antistius Veter,* ch. viii.	1	6
4001	749	The first year of Christ to the 25th of December. On the first of January he is circumcised, ch. viii, art. 3. On the 6th he is adored by the magi, ch. ix. He is presented in the temple on the 2d of February, the day of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, ch. x. Joseph leaving Bethlehem, flies into Egypt with the child and his mother, ch. xi. Herod orders all the male children under two years old to be slain, ch. xi.	—	5

* We follow the most celebrated chronologists in reckoning the year of the world according to the Hebrew text and the Vulgate. As to the month and day of our Saviour's birth, the universal Church, both Latin and Greek, are agreed in fixing it on the 25th of December, which, according to some authors, fell that year on a Sunday. See Labbe, t. 9, Conc. p. 1207.

Years of the world.	Years of Rome.		Years before Christ.	Yrs. before the V. Era
4002	750	Herod dies, Archelaus his son reigns in his place.	2	4
—	—	Joseph returns out of Egypt.		
4005	753	The Nativity of Christ our Lord, is this year, according to the vulgar era, the 25th of December. This era however is reckoned from the beginning of January following.	5	1
				Yrs. of the V. Era
4006	754	The first year of the vulgar era.	6	1
4012	760	Christ in his twelfth year came with his parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and remained there for three days, ch. xii. From this year of Christ to his thirtieth year, nothing occurs concerning him in holy scripture. St. Luke, ch. ii. 51, 52, only mentions that Jesus came to Nazareth with his parents, and *was subject to them, and that he advanced in wisdom and age, and in grace before God and men*, ch. xii.	12	7
4030	778	John, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, began to *preach the baptism of penance:* dated, not from the death of Augustus, but from the time when the Roman senate decreed Tiberius should be associated with him in the empire,* ch. xiii.	30	25
4031	779	Christ our Lord was baptised in the fifteenth year of Tiberius the Emperor, in the consulate of Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Gætulicus and C. Calvesius Sabinus, in the beginning of the 31st year of his age, ch. xiv.	31	26
4031	779	After receiving baptism from John, he retires into a desert, and fasts during forty days, ch. xv.	—	—
—	—	At the end of February or the beginning of March he changed water into wine at the marriage-feast of Cana in Galilee, ch. xviii.	—	—
—	—	He celebrates the first Passover, ch. xix.	—	—
—	—	By the command of Herod Antipas, John is cast into prison, ch. xxii.	—	—
—	—	Christ more publicly undertakes the office of preaching to the Jews.	—	—
4032	780	The second year of Christ's preaching.	32	27

* Or, as Patercalus expresses it, lib.2, c. 121, "Ut æquum ejus in omnibus provinciis excertibusque esset, quam erat ipsi Augusto," viz. from the 744 U. C. Pagi ad an. 32, writes: "Lucan de an. 15, Imperii Proconsularis Tiberii, non vero de an. Imperii ejus Augusti intelligendum antiqui docudrunt," See Graveson, Honore of St. Mary, t. 3.

Years of the world.	Years of Rome,		Years of Christ.	Yrs. of the V. Era.
4032	780	He celebrates the second Passover.	32	27
—	—	He chooses twelve apostles, ch. xl.	—	—
4033	781	The third year of Christ's preaching.	33	28
—	—	He celebrates the third Passover.	—	—
—	—	He chooses 72 disciples, ch. lxxix.	—	—
4034	782	The Sunday or first day of the week, which was the 20th of March, he enters Jerusalem in a triumphal manner, riding on an ass, ch. cix. In the beginning of that week, he went daily into the temple, and in the evenings returned to Bethania, to pray in the garden of Gethsemani, Luke xxi. 38, etc.	34	29
—	—	On Wednesday the 23d of March, Judas makes an agreement with the chief priests to deliver Jesus to them for a sum of money, ch. cxxvii.	—	—
—	—	On Thursday, Christ sent his disciples in the afternoon to prepare the Paschal lamb, which had been offered in the temple: this he ate, among his twelve apostles. He, after sunset, washed their feet, John xiii.; ch. cxxix. After supper he instituted the blessed sacrament and sacrifice of his body and blood, ch. cxxx.	—	—
—	—	He gave his apostles those exellent instructions set down by St. John, ch. xiv. 17.	—	—
—	—	The same night, viz. the 24th of March, after praying three different times, he is, by Judas, betrayed and seized in the garden of Gethsemani, ch. cxxxvii.	—	—
—	—	He is led first to Annas, then to Caiphas, c. cxxxviii.	—	—
—	—	On Friday morning, being the 25th of March, the Jews deliver him up to Pilate, who declares him innocent; yet afterwards, apprehensive of the displeasure of Cæsar, condemns him to the death of the cross, about nine o'clock, ch. cxl. et seq.	—	—
—	—	Jesus is crucified about noon on the 25th of March, in the eighteenth year of Tiberius from the time of his being associated with Augustus in the general government of the provinces, under the consulate of the two Gemini,* ch. cxliii.	—	—

* As Tertullian, advers. Jud. c 8 St. Austin, l. 18, de | Civ. c. 54, Victor Aquitanus, in Chron., Lactantius, l. 4,

Years of the world.	Years of Rome.		Years of Christ.	Yrs. of the V.Era.
4034	782	At Christ's crucifixion darkness covered the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour, that is, from twelve till three in the afternoon.	34	29
—	—	Jesus died at the age of thirty-three years and three months. He was buried the same day, according to the manner of the Jews. ch. cxliv.	—	—
—	—	On the third day after his death, which was Sunday the 27th of March, early in the morning he raised himself to life again, ch. cxlv. On the day of his resurrection he appeared five different times.	—	—
—	—	The eighth day after his resurrection, the 3d of April, he again manifested himslf to his disciples, and presented his wounds to be handled by Thomas, ch. cxlvii.	—	—
—	—	Forty days after his resurrection he again appeared to his disciples, whom he led forth to Mount Olivet, and from thence ascended into heaven, in their sight, on the 5th of May, ch. cl.	—	—
—	—	On the day of Pentecost, which was the fifteenth of the same month, he sent down the Holy Ghost upon his disciples in a visible manner, Acts of the Apostles, ch. ii.	—	—

Inst. c. 10, St. Prosper, the Liberian Calendar, and many other old calendars testify. See Berti, Diss. Hist. 6.

There have been various opinions concerning the day of the month on which our Saviour suffered. We have adopted that which places his death on Friday the 25th of March and the 15th of the lunar month Nisan; for this is supported by the authority of the most ancient fathers. See the foregoing citations, to which we may add Bede, (de Ratione Temporum, c. 45;) St. Isidore, (lib. 6, Etymol. c. 17; Cassidorus, in Chron.: and the old Roman Martyrology, by Roseweid. Hence Benedict XIV. calls it, "An ancient and constant tradition," and Henschinus refers to twenty-four manuscript martyrologies which he had seen in different parts of Europe, all of which uniformly agree in fixing the death of Christ on the 25th of March. In confirmation of that, Benedict XIV. mentions also the Paschal cycle of St. Hippolytus Martyr, engraved on marble, an. 222, which was dug up near the church of St. Laurence without the walls of Rome, in the year 1551, and which is preserved in the Vatican library. As to the moderns, Henry Philippi (in Quæstionibus Chronologicis de an. Nativ. et Passi. Christi, c. 19) enumerates above thirty eminent writers in favor of this opinion. It is objected to it, that it does not agree with the astronomical cycles: but these have been often altered, nor do we know what cycles the Jews followed. Samuel Petit demonstrates them to have been confused, especially after Herod had introduced the Roman correction and calendar, nor do we know how the Jews reconciled to it their lunar month Nisan. Their manner of observing the new moon, as described by Lamy, and their leader. demonstrates them not to have been nice in calendaring the cycles. See Honore of St. Mary, (t. 2, diss. 1,) where he shows that these astronomical tables, on which so much stress is laid, contradict each other, and therefore that nothing certain can be proved from them. The learned Petavius had before made the same observation, (lib. 12, c. 11, de Doctrina Temporum,) "Desinant igitur," says he "chronologi, in anno dieque passionis eruendo, mathematicorum calculis, noviluniorum et pleniluniorum minutis ac scrupulosis ratiociniis sibi ac lectoribus suis negotium facessere. Quo in genere nimia sane *periergia*, curiositas quorumdam extitit, sed imprimis Pauli. Fero Semproniensis et ante hunc Abulensis, post vero Joan. Lucidi atque Scaligeri."

*** *The above chronological table places the reader in possession of the best authorities on the "Years of Christ;" but, as the scriptural study connected with the whole "Evangelical Life of Christ" is highly beneficial by its holy examples for pious followers,, we have added tables of the miracles, discourses, and parables of Jesus, (also arranged chronologically,) which will be found in the following pages.*

THE PRINCIPAL DISCOURSES OF JESUS,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

JESUS

	Places.	Chap.
Turns water into wine	Cana.	18
Cures the ruler's son of Capharnaum	Ditto.	25
Causes a miraculous draught of fishes	Sea of Galilee.	26
Delivers a man possessed with an unclean spirit	Capharnaum.	27
Heals Peter's mother-in-law of a fever	Ditto.	28
Appeases a violent storm	Sea of Galilee.	31
Cures the demoniacs of Gadara, or Gergesa	Gadara.	32
Cures a man of the palsy	Capharnaum.	33
Cures a woman diseased with a flux of blood	Ditto.	35
Restores to life the daughter of Jairus	Ditto.	ib.
Restores to sight two blind men	Ditto.	36
Heals a dumb man possessed by a devil	Ditto.	ib.
Cures an infirm man at Bethsaida	Jerusalem.	37
Cures a man with a withered hand	Capharnaum	39
Cleanses a leper	Ditto.	44
Heals the centurion's servant—Raises to life the widow's son	Naim.	45, 46
Feeds miraculously 5,000 men with five loaves and two fishes	Decapolis.	57
Walks upon the sea, and enables Peter to do the same, calms the tempest, and heals the sick	Sea of Galilee. / Genesareth.	58
Heals the daughter of the Cananean woman	Near Tyre.	61
Cures a man who was deaf and dumb, and many others	Decapolis.	62
Feeds miraculously 4,000 men with seven loaves and a few fishes	Ditto.	63
Gives sight to a blind man	Bethsaida.	65
Cures a boy possessed with a dumb spirit	Thabor.	68
Cleanses ten lepers	Samaria.	73
Heals an infirm woman	Galilee.	88
Cures a dropsy	Ditto	91
Raises Lazarus to life	Bethania	102
Cures two blind men	Jericho	107
Casts out the buyers and sellers	Jerusalem	110
Blasts the barren fig-tree	Olivet	111
Makes the officers and people to fall before him	Gethsemani	137
Heals the ear of Malchus	Ditto	ib.
Causes a miraculous draught of fishes	Sea of Galilee	148

THE CHIEF PARABLES OF JESUS, ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

PARABLE OF THE

	Places.	Chap.
Two debtors		48
Sower	Capharnaum.	51
Tares	Ditto	51
Seed springing up imperceptibly	Ditto	51
Grain of mustard seed	Ditto	51
Leaven	Ditto	51
Found treasure	Ditto	53
Precious pearl	Ditto	53
Net	Ditto	53
Hundred sheep	Ditto	79
Samaritans	Near Jericho	80
Rich glutton	Galilee	85
Servants who waited for their Lord	Ditto	86
Lost sheep	Ditto	93

PARABLE OF THE

	Places.	Chap.
Lost piece of money	Galilee	93
Prodigal son	Ditto	93
Dishonest steward	Ditto	94
Rich man and Lazarus	Ditto	97
Unjust judge	Peræa	98
Pharisee and publican	Ditto	99
Laborers in the vineyard	Ditto	101
Pounds	Jericho	106
Barren fig-tree	Jerusalem	111
Two sons	Ditto	113
Vineyard	Ditto	113
Marriage-feast	Ditto	114
Ten virgins	Ditto	124
Talents	Ditto	125

Explanations of these parables will generally be found in the chapters following the relation of their utterance.

THE PRINCIPAL MIRACLES OF JESUS.

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

	Places.	*Chap.*
Conversation with Nicodemus	Jerusalem	20
Conversation with the Samaritan woman	Sichar	23
Vindication of his disciples for not fasting	Capharnaum	34
Vindication of himself and of his mission	Jerusalem	37
Vindication of his disciples for plucking ears of corn on the sabbath-day	Galilee	38
Vindication of himself for healing the withered hand on the sabbath-day	Ditto	39
Sermon on the mount	Thabar 41 42	43
Denunciations against Corozain, etc.	Galilee	47
Refutation of the blasphemous calumny of the Jews, that he wrought miracles by the agency of Beelzebub	Capharnaum	49
Instructions to the apostles	Galilee	56
Discourse concerning the heavenly bread	Capharnaum	59
Discourse respecting internal purity	Ditto	60
Discourse against giving or taking scandal	Ditto	70
Discourse concerning fraternal correction	Ditto	71
Discourse at the feast of tabernacles	Jerusalem	74
Discourse on occasion of the adulterous woman being brought	Ditto	75
Discourse respecting the qualities of his sheep	Ditto	78
Instructions addressed to the seventy disciples	Peræa	79
Denunciations against the scribes and pharisees	Ditto	83
Discourse against the fear of death	Ditto	84
Discourse against worldly prudence and solicitude	Ditto	85
Discourse respecting the necessity of self-denial		92
Discourse on the bond of matrimony, and in favor of virginity		95
Discourse on the coming of Christ, and the sudden destruction of the wicked		97
Discourse on the salvation of the rich, and the happiness of leaving all for Christ		100
Conversation of Christ with Martha		102
Exhortation to faith, in opposition to the incredulity of the Jews		110
Discourse respecting the lawfulness of his mission		112
Discourse on the first and greatest commandment		117
Discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem		121
Discourse concerning the sufferings of his apostles		ib.
Discourse concerning watchfulness		123
Discourse concerning his last coming		126
Conversation with Peter on occasion of washing his feet		129
Discourse concerning superiority		132
Consolatory discourse to his apostles after the last supper		133
Continuation of the above discourse in the way to Gethsemani		134
Another continuation		135
Discourse to the disciples before his ascension		149

A

Table of the Gospels,

FOR ALL

SUNDAYS, HOLIDAYS, AND OTHER PARTICULAR OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

☞ THE FIRST NUMBER INDICATES THE CHAPTER, AND THE SECOND THE ARTICLE.

GOSPELS.

Advent.

		Chap.	*Art.*
1 Sunday	THERE shall be signs in the sun, Luke xxi. 25, 33	122	2
2 Sunday	When John in prison had heard, Matt. xi. 2, 10	47	1
3 Sunday	The Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, John i. 19, 28	16	2

Ember-Days.

Wednesday	The angel Gabriel was sent from God, Luke i. 26, 38	3	—
Friday	Mary rising up, went in haste, Luke i. 39, 47	4	—
Saturday	As on the Sunday following		
4 Sunday	In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, Luke iii. 1. 6	13	1
Christmas-Eve	When Mary the mother of Jesus was espoused, Matt. i. 18, 21	7	—

Christmas-Day.

1 Mass	A decree was published by Augustus Cæsar, Luke ii. 1, 14	8	1
2 Mass	The shepherds said one to another, Luke ii. 15, 20	8	2
3 Mass	In the beginning was the Word, John i. 14	1	—
St. Stephen	Behold I send to you prophets, Matt. xxiii. 34, 39	83	3
St. John	Jesus saith to Peter, follow me, John xxi, 29, 24	148	3
Holy Innocents	An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, Matt. ii. 13, 18	11	1
St. Thomas, Canterbury	I am the good pastor, John x. 11, 16	78	2
Sunday within the Octave	Joseph and Mary the mother of Jesus wondered at the things that were said of him, Luke ii. 33, 40	10	2
St. Sylvester	Let your loins be girt, Luke xii. 35, 40	86	1
New Year, or Circumcision	After eight days were expired, etc., Luke ii. 21, 22	8	3
Octave of Christmas	The shepherds said one to another, Luke ii. 15, 20	8	2
Vigils of Epiphany	When Herod was dead, Matt. ii. 19, 23	11	3

		Chap.	Art
Epiphany	When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Matt. ii. 1, 12	9	—
1 Sunday	When Jesus was twelve years old, Luke ii. 42, 52	12	—
Octave of Epiphany	John saw Jesus coming to him, John i. 29, 34	16	3
2 Sunday after the Epiphany	There was a marriage at Cana, John ii. 1, 11	18	—
Holy Name	After eight days were expired, Luke ii. 21, 22	8	3
3 Sunday	When Jesus was come down from the mountain, a very great multitude, Matt. viii. 1, 13	45	—
4 Sunday	Jesus going into a ship, his disciples, Matt. viii, 23, 27	31	—
5 Sunday	The kingdom of heaven is like to a man who sowed good seed, etc., Matt. xiii. 24, 30	52	—
6 Sunday	The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, Matt. xiii. 31, 35	51 & 53	4 & 3
Septuagesima	The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a family who went, etc., Matt. xx. 1, 16	92	—
Sexagesima	A very great multitude coming together, Luke viii. 4, 15	52	1 2 3
Quinquagesima	Jesus taking aside the twelve apostles, Luke xviii. 31, 43	107	1
Ash-Wednesday	When you fast, Matt. vi. 16, 21	42	3
Thursday	When Jesus had entered into Capernaum, Matt. viii. 5, 13	45	—
Friday	You have heard that it was said, Matt. 43, 4	41	5
Saturday	It being late in the evening the ship, Mark iv. 47, 57	58	—
1 Sunday in Lent	Jesus was led by the Spirit into, etc., Matt. iv. 1, 11	15	5
Monday	When the Son of man shall come, etc., Matt. xxv. 31	126	—
Tuesday	When Jesus was come into Jerusalem, Matt. xxi. 10, 17	110	1
Ember-Wednesday	Master, we would see a sign, Matt. xii. 38	49	6
Thursday	Jesus going thence went towards Tyre, Matt. xv. 21, 28	62	—
Ember-Friday	There was a festival of the Jews, John v. 1, 15	37	1
Ember-Saturday	Jesus took Peter, James, and John, Matt. xvii. 1, 9	67	1
2 Sunday in Lent	Jesus took Peter, James, and John, Matt. xvii. 1, 9	67	1 2
Monday	I go, and you shall seek me, John viii. 21, 29	76	2
Tuesday	The scribes and Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses, Matt. xxiii. 1, 12	119	1
Wednesday	Jesus going up to Jerusalem, Matt. xx. 17, 28	104	1
Thursday	There was a certain rich man, Luke xvi. 19, 31	97	—
Friday	There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and hedged it, Matt. xxi. 33, 46	113	2
Saturday	A certain man had two sons, Luke xv. 11	95	3
3 Sunday in Lent	Jesus was casting out a devil, Luke xi. 14, 28	49	1
Monday	Physician, cure thyself, Luke iv. 23, 30	54	3
Tuesday	If thy brother offend against thee, Matt. xviii. 15, 22	71	1
Wednesday	Why do thy disciples transgress, Matt. xv. 1, 20	60	1
Thursday	Jesus going out of the synagogue, Luke iv, 38, 44	28	—
Friday	Jesus came to a city of Samaria, John iv. 5, 42	23	2
Saturday	Jesus went to Mount Olivet, John viii. 1, 11	75	—
4 Sunday in Lent	Jesus crossed over the sea of Galilee, John vi. 1, 15	58	2
Monday	The Passover of the Jews was near, John ii. 13, 25	19	1
Tuesday	The festival day being now half spent, John vii. 14, 31	74	1
Wednesday	Jesus passing by, saw a man that had been born blind, John ix. 1, 38	77	1
Thursday	Jesus went into a city called Naim, Luke vii. 11, 16	46	—
Friday	There was a certain man sick called Lazarus, John xi. 1, 45	102	1
Saturday	I am the light of the world, John viii. 12, 20	76	1
Passion-Sunday	Which of you will convict me of sin, John viii. 46, 59	76	4
Monday	The rulers and Pharisees sent officers, John vii. 32, 39	74	3
Tuesday	Jesus went into Galilee, John vii. 1, 13	60	1

		Chap.	Art.
Wednesday	The feast of the Dedication was kept at Jerusalem, John x. 22, 38.	89	1
Thursday	One of the pharisees asked Jesus to eat, Luke vii. 36, 50	38	—
Friday	The chief priests and pharisees assembled, John xi. 47, 54	103	1
The Seven Dolours	There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, John xix. 25, 27	143	8
Saturday	The chief priests consulted to kill Lazarus, John xii. 10, 36	108	3
Palm-Sunday	When the Lord drew nigh unto Jerusalem, Matt. xxi. 1, 10	109	1
The Passion	You know that after two days the passover, Matt. xxvi. 2	137	—
Monday	Six days before the passover, Jesus came, etc., John xii. 1, 9	108	1
Tuesday-Passion	After two days was the feast of the passover, Mark xiv. 1	137	1
Wednesday-Passion	The feast of unleavened bread which is called, etc., Luke xxii. 1	137	1
Maunday-Thursday	Before the festival of the passover, Jesus, etc., John xiii. 1, 15	129	—
Good-Friday	Jesus went out with his disciples, John xviii. 1	137	1
Holy-Saturday	In the evening of the Sabbath which dawneth, Matt. xxviii. 1, 7	145	1

Easter.

Sunday	Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of, etc., Mark xvi. 1, 7	145	—
Monday	Two of the disciples of Jesus went that day, Luke xxiv. 13, 35	146	1
Tuesday	Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples, Luke xxiv. 36, 46	147	2
Wednesday	Jesus showed himself again to his disciples, John xxi. 1, 14	148	1
Thursday	Mary stood without at the sepulchre, John xx. 12, 18	145	3
Friday	The eleven disciples went away into Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16	149	1
Saturday	The first day of the week Mary Magdalen, John xx. 1, 9	145	1
Low-Sunday	The same day, it being the first day, John xx. 19	147	1

After Easter.

2 Sunday	I am the good shepherd, John x. 11, 16	78	2
3 Sunday	A little while, and you shall not see, John xvi. 16, 22	135	3
4 Sunday	I am going to him that sent me, John xvi. 5, 14	135	1
5 Sunday	Verily, verily, I say to you: If you ask, etc., John xvi. 23, 30	135	2

Rogation.

Monday and Tuesday	Which of you shall have a friend, Luke xi. 5, 13	82	2
Ascension Eve	Jesus lifting up his eyes to heaven, John xvii. 1, 11	136	1
Ascension	Jesus appeared to the eleven, Mark xvi. 14	147	1
6 Sunday	When the Paraclete cometh, John xv. 26	134	3
Whitsun-Eve	If you love me, keep my commandments, John xiv. 15, 21	135	2
Whit-Sunday	If any one love me, he will keep, etc., John xiv. 23, 31	133	2
Whit-Monday	God hath so loved the world, John iii. 16, 21	20	2
Whit-Tuesday	He that entereth not by the door, John x. 1, 10	78	1
Ember-Wednesday	No man can come to me unless the Father, etc., John vi, 44, 52	59	4
Thursday	Jesus calling together the twelve disciples, Luke ix. 1, 6	37	2
Friday	It came to pass on a certain day, etc., Luke v. 17, 26	33	1
Saturday	Jesus rising up to go out of the synagogue, Luke iv. 38, 44	28	1
Trinity-Sunday	All power in heaven and on earth is, etc., Matt. xxviii. 18	149	2

After Pentecost.

1 Sunday	Be ye merciful, as your Father also, etc., Luke vi. 36, 42	42	6
Corpus Christi	My flesh is meat indeed, John vi. 56, 59	59	5

2 Sunday	A certain man made a great supper, Luke xiv. 16, 24	93	4
3 Sunday	The publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus, Luke xv. 1, 10	95	1
4 Sunday	When the people pressed on Jesus, Luke v. 1, 11	26	2
5 Sunday	Except your justice exceed that of, Matt. v. 20, 24	41	1
6 Sunday	When there was a great multitude, Mark viii. 1, 9	63	—
7 Sunday	Beware of false prophets, who come, etc., Matt. vii. 15, 21	43	4
8 Sunday	There was a certain rich man, who, etc., Luke xvi. 1, 19	96	1
9 Sunday	As Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41, 47	109	5
10 Sunday	Jesus spoke this parable to certain men, Luke xviii. 9, 14	99	—
11 Sunday	Jesus going out from the borders of Tyre, Mark vii, 31, 37	62	—
12 Sunday	Blessed are the eyes that see the things, etc., Luke x. 23, 37	79	3
13 Sunday	As Jesus went to Jerusalem, he passed, etc., Luke xvii. 11, 19	73	—
14 Sunday	No man can serve two masters, Matt. vi. 24, 33	42	6
15 Sunday	Jesus went into a city called Naim, Luke vii, 11, 16	46	—
16 Sunday	When Jesus went into the house of, etc., Luke xiv. 1, 11	93	1
17 Sunday	And one of them, a doctor of the law, Matt. xxii. 34	117	—
Ember-Wednesday in September	Master, I have brought to thee my son, Mark ix. 16, 28	68	—
Ember-Friday	One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, Luke vii. 36	38	—
Ember-Saturday	A certain man had a fig-tree, Luke xiii. 6, 17	87	—
18 Sunday	Jesus getting into a boat, Matt. ix 1, 8	33	1
19 Sunday	The kingdom of heaven is like to a king, etc., Matt. xxii. 1, 14	114	—
20 Sunday	There was a certain ruler, whose son, etc., John iv. 46, 53	25	—
21 Sunday	The kingdom of heaven is like a king, Matt. xviii. 23	71	3
22 Sunday	The pharisees went and consulted together, Matt. xxii. 15, 21	115	—
23 Sunday	As Jesus was speaking to the multitude, Matt. ix. 18, 26	35	1
24 Sunday	When you shall see the abomination, Matt. xxiv. 15, 35	121	4

IF THERE BE MORE THAN 24 SUNDAYS AFTER PENTECOST, THE GOSPELS ARE TAKEN FROM THE 3, 4, 5, OR 6 SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

For Particular Occasions.

NOVEMBER.

29 Vigil of St. Andrew	Jesus was standing with two of his disciples, John i. 35	17	—
30 St. Andrew	Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, Matt. iv. 18, 22	26	2

DECEMBER.

8 Conception	The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Matt. 1, 16	6	—
21 St. Thomas	Thomas one of the twelve who was called, John xx. 24	147	2

JANUARY.

25 Conversion of St. Paul	Behold we have left all things, Matt. xix. 27	91	2

FEBRUARY.

2 Purification	When the days of the purification, Luke ii. 22, 32	10	1
24 St. Mathias	I give thee thanks, O Father, etc., Matt. x. 25, 30	79	3

MARCH.

19 St. Joseph	When Mary the mother of Jesus was, etc., Matt. i. 18	87	—
25 Annunciation	The angel Gabriel was sent, Luke i. 26	3	—

APRIL.

25 St. Mark	The Lord appointed also other seventy-two, Luke x. 1, 9	79	2

MAY.

1 Sts. Philip & James	Let not your heart be troubled, John xiv. 1, 13	133	1
3 Invocation of the Cross	There was a man, one of the pharisees, John iii. 1, 16	20	—
4 St. Monica	Jesus went into a city called Naim, Luke vii. 11	46	—
6 St. John at the Latin Gate	The mother of the sons of Zebedee, Matt. xx. 20, 23	104	2
8 Apparition of St. Michael	Who thinkest thou is the greatest, Matt. xviii. 1, 10	70	1

JUNE.

11 St. Barnaby	Behold I send you as sheep, Matt. x. 16. 22	56	4
23 Vigil of St. John	In the days of Herod, King of Judea, Luke i. 5, 17	2	—
24 St. John Baptist	Elizabeth's time of being delivered was, etc., Luke i. 57	5	—
28 Vigil of Sts. Peter and Paul.	Jesus said to Simon Peter, John xxi. 15, 19	148	—
29 Sts. Peter and Paul	Jesus came into the parts of Cesarea, Matt. xvi. 13	66	1
30 Commemoration of St. Paul	Behold I send you as sheep, Matt. x. 16	56	4

JULY.

2 Visitation	Mary rising up in those days, Luke i. 39	4	—
20 St. Jerome Emilian	Some little children were presented, Matt. xix. 13, 22	90	—
22 St. Mary Magdalen	One of the pharisees asked Jesus to eat, Luke vii. 36	48	—
25 St. James	The mother of the sons of Zebedee, Matt. xx. 23	104	2
26 St. Anne	The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, Matt. xiii. 44, 52	53	4

AUGUST.

6 Transfiguration	Jesus took Peter and James and John, Matt. xvii. 1	67	1
9 Vigil	If any one will come after me, Matt. xvi. 24	66	5
10 St. Lawrence	Unless the grain of wheat, John xii. 24	100	4
14 Vigil	A certain woman from the crowd, Luke xi. 27, 28	50	—
15 Assumption	Jesus entered into a certain village, Luke x. 38	81	—
Sunday, within the Octave. St Joachim	The book of the genealogy, Matt. i. 1	6	—
24 St. Bartholomew	Jesus went up into a mountain, Luke vi. 12	40	1
25 St. Lewis	A certain nobleman went into, etc., Luke xix. 12	106	—
29 Decollation St. John Baptist	Herod sent and apprehended John, Mark vi. 17	22	—

SEPTEMBER.

		Chap.	Art.
8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin	The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Matt. i. 1	6	—
Name of the Blessed Virgin	Luke i. 26	3	—
14 Exaltation of the Cross	Now is the judgment of the world, John xii. 31	100	3
20 Vigil	Jesus saw a publican called Levi, Luke v. 27	34	1
21 St. Matthew	Jesus saw a man sitting in the, Matt. ix. 9	34	1
29 Dedication of St. Michael	The disciples came to Jesus, saying. Matt. xviii. 1	70	1

OCTOBER.

2 Angel-guardians	Matt. xviii. 1	70	—
4 St. Francis	I give thanks to Thee, O Father, Matt. xi. 25, 30	79	3
9 St. Dionysius	Beware ye of the leaven of the pharisees, Luke xii. 1	84	—
18 St. Luke	The Lord appointed also other seventy-two, Luke x. 1, 9	79	2
27 Vigil	I am the true vine, John xv. 1, 7	134	1
28 Sts. Simon and Jude.	These things I command you, John xv. 17, 23	134	3
31 Vigil	Jesus, coming down with them, Luke vi. 17	40	3

NOVEMBER.

1 All Saints	Jesus seeing the multitudes, Matt. v. 1. 12	41	1
2 All Souls	Verily, verily, I say to you, John v. 25, 29	37	2
11 St. Martin	No man lighteth a candle, Luke xi. 33, 36	41	8
21 Presentation of the Blessed Virgin	A certain woman from the crowd, Luke xi. 27	50	—
27 St. Gregory Thaumaturgus	Have faith in God, Mark xi. 22	111	3
Vigil of Apostles	This is my commandment, John xv, 12	134	2
The Commemoration of 1 Martyr	If any one come after me and hate not, Luke xiv. 26	94	—
And Bishop	If any man will come after me, Matt. xvi. 24	66	5
Of a Martyr, not a Bishop	Do not think that I come to send peace, Matt. x. 34	56	—
Of a Martyr, in Paschal time	I am the true vine, John xv. 1	134	1
Of many Martyrs	I am the vine, you are the branches, John xv. 5	134	2
Of many Martyrs, after Paschal time	When you shall hear of wars and seditions, Luke xxi. 9, 19	121	2
Ditto	Jesus going down from the mountain, Luke vi. 17, 23	40	—
Ditto	As Jesus was sitting on Mount Olivet, Matt. xxiv. 3, 14	121	2
Of a Confessor & Bishop	A man going to a far country, Matt. xxv. 17	125	—
Ditto.	Watch ye therefore, because you know not, etc., Matt. xxiv. 42	86	2
Of a Doctor	You are the salt of the earth, Matt. v. 13	41	1
Of a Confessor, not a Bishop	Let your loins be girt, Luke xii. 35	86	2
Ditto	Fear not, little flock, Luke xii. 32, 34	85	2
Of Abbots	Behold we have left all things, Matt. xix. 27	91	2
Of a Virgin and Martyr	The kingdom of heaven shall be like to ten virgins, Matt. xxv. 1	124	—
Ditto	The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, Matt. xiii. 44	53	4

		Chap.	Art.
Of a Virgin not a Martyr	The kingdom of heaven is like, etc., Matt. xiii. 44	53	4
Of holy Women	The kingdom of heaven is like to, etc., Matt. xiii. 44	53	4
Of the Dedication	Jesus entering in, walked, Luke xix. 1, 10	109	—
Of the Blessed Trinity	When the Paraclete shall come, John xxxv. 26	133	1
Of the Holy Ghost	If any one loves me, John xiv. 23	133	3
Of the Holy Eucharist	My flesh is meat indeed, John vi. 36	59	5
Of the Holy Cross	Jesus took the twelve disciples, Matt. xx. 17	104	1
Of the Passion	Jesus knowing that all things, Luke xix, 28	143	10
Of the Blessed Virgin in Advent	The angel Gabriel was sent, Luke i. 26, 3	3	—
Ditto from the Nativity.	The shepherds said one to another, Luke ii. 15, 20	8	2
Of the B. V. from the Purification	A certain woman from the crowd, Luke xi. 27	50	—
Ditto from the Passion	There stood by the cross of Jesus, John xix. 25	143	8
Of the angels	Jesus saw Nathaniel, John i. 47	17	2
Of Sts. Peter and Paul	Behold we have left all things, Matt. xix. 27	91	—
For the sick	When Jesus had entered into Capharnaum, Matt. viii. 5	45	—
For the bridegroom, etc.	The pharisees came to Jesus tempting him, Matt. xix. 3, 6	90	1
Day of death or burial	Martha said to Jesus: Lord, if thou, etc., John xi. 21, 27	102	1
On an anniversary	All that the Father giveth me, John vi. 37, 40	59	3
For travellers	Going preach, saying, Matt. x. 7	56	3
For removing schism	Jesus lifting up his eyes to heaven, John xvii. 11	136	2
In any necessity	Have faith in God, Mark xi. 22	111	3
Against pagans	Which of you shall have a friend, Luke xi. 5	82	2
For the remission of sins	Ask and it shall be given to you, Luke xi. 9	82	2
In time of war	Tell us when these things shall be, Matt. xxiv. 3	121	2
For peace	The same day, it being the first day, John xx. 19	147	1
Time of plague or mortality	Jesus going out of the synagogue, Luke iv. 38, 44	28	—


The
Holy Family

THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

IN FOUR BOOKS:

WITH

COPIOUS NOTES.

Οὕτω κατὰ κράτος ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου ηὔξανε καὶ ἰσχυεν.
"So mightily grew the word, and was confirmed."

Δεῖ με καὶ Ῥώμην ἰδεῖν.
"I must see Rome also."

Acts, xix, 20, 21.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES CONSTANTINE PISE, D. D.

AUTHOR OF "ALYTHEIA," "ST. IGNATIUS AND HIS FIRST COMPANIONS," ETC., ETC.

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND JOHN M'CLOSKEY, D.D.,

BISHOP OF AXIEREN,

AND COADJUTOR OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK.

THIS WORK,

A MEMORIAL OF THE PAST—A TOKEN OF THE PRESENT—

A PLEDGE OF THE FUTURE,

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED,

BY HIS DEVOTED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

On the last day of the month of June, several years ago, I found myself in the metropolis of the Christian world. This day is celebrated, with extraordinary festivity and pomp, both in the Church and in the city. Early in the morning, having assisted at mass in the Vatican, I set out on a kind of ecclesiastical pilgrimage to the places which were consecrated by the blood of St. Peter and St. Paul. The beautiful sky of Italy appeared more radiant and mild than ever, as I bent my way to the mount *Janiculum*, and thence, out of the walls, to the *Salvian Fountains*. The former venerable for the martyrdom of the chief of the Apostles, and the latter, of the "Vessel of Election." My taste, in early youth, when engaged in studying at Rome, was somewhat similar to that of St. Jerome, who thus describes the eagerness with which he was wont to visit these sacred places: "When I was a boy, pursuing my studies at Rome, I was accustomed to go round, on Sundays, with companions of the same age and pursuits, to the sepulchres of the apostles and the tombs of the

martyrs. We often went down into catacombs, cut out in the depths of the earth," &c. (1)

It was amid such scenes—and particularly at the *Salvian fountains*—that the idea first presented itself to my mind of rendering into verse the "Acts of the Apostles." But it was only recently, after reading the elegant posthumous work of the celebrated Jesuit, Père de Ligny, that I resolved to enter upon the task: in the accomplishment of which, I take pride in acknowledging myself indebted to that great man for the arrangement, connection, unity, and notes, of the composition. (2)

Perhaps the manner and style of the work may tend to produce a two-fold effect: first, to invite the attention of all Christians to the study of this inspired narrative; and secondly, to convince the public, that the Catholic Church loves to unlock the fountains of the Scriptures to her faithful and humble children. If I succeed in bringing about this result, my hopes will be crowned, and my labors abundantly rewarded.

(1) "Dum essem Romæ puer, et liberalibus studiis erudirer, solebam cum cæteris ejusdem ætatis et propositi diebus dominicis sepulchra apostolorum et martyrum circumire; crebroque cryptas ingredi in terrarum profunda defossas," &c. (Tom. v. p. 968. Ed. Vall.)

(2) It is but just to add, that for the preface and appendix, I am indebted to the same eloquent and learned writer.

PREFACE.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES may be considered an appendix to the life of Christ, as contained in the four gospels: or, perhaps more properly still, the confirmation and completion of the gospels. For in them Jesus had made great promises, had announced sublime truths, had taught a code of perfect morality. None of his words could fall ineffectually to the ground: all should, in due season, be accomplished. It was necessary, therefore, that his promises should be fulfilled by the event; that his mysteries should be recognised by the faith of the people; and that his moral law, so far above all human strength, should, nevertheless, be adopted and faithfully observed. Thus Jesus Christ would not have spoken in vain; and the divinity of his mission would be demonstrated by its success in conquering the errors and vices of the world.

This is what we are taught in the Acts of the Apostles. Christ had hardly quitted the earth before the Holy Ghost, so often and solemnly promised, descended upon the Apostles:—these weak men, clothed with the virtue of the Most High on

a sudden, dared present themselves before the Jews and preach the name of Christ. They proclaimed as their God and Messiah, and the only author of their salvation, that Jesus, who had fallen a victim to their hatred and cruelty. Thousands were immediately converted; and from their union with the Apostles results the Christian Church, composed of a flock and shepherds. All the nations of the earth are called, and crowd into her fold. Peter receives the first; Paul gathers the multitude. The wild olive is ingrafted on the sweet; Israel is the common trunk; and of the two united people is formed the chosen race, the true Israel—or, as the Apostle styles it, the *Israel of God*, (1)—the term of his promises, the object of his tender complacency.

Thus, in spite of the opposition of nature, and the prejudices of reason, the CRUCIFIED ONE is adored; and, what is still more astonishing, his code of morality is practised:—that morality, more pure and sublime than ever had been conceived by human wisdom. The mind comprehends it, the passions submit to it. And a multitude of vicious men, united together as it were by chance, become instantaneously a society of saints. The most esteemed philosophers never were able to reform the smallest village; and now a prodigious reform, the work of a few poor fishermen, has

(1) Galatians, vi. 16.

spread from Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity, to the extreme boundaries of the habitable earth. Its progress was so rapid, that they who had known Christ in person—his contemporaries and disciples—lived long enough to see with their own eyes the accomplishment of the prophecy which they had heard from his adorable lips: *And I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all things to myself.* (1)

He who does not discern the finger of God in all this, must be blind indeed. "If there be any prodigy more astonishing than that of the establishment of Religion, it is the incredulity of those who refuse to yield to the evidence of its proofs." (2) With this most striking remark of the venerable Father de Ligny, I will leave the reader to his own considerations.

(1) John, xii. 32.

(2) S'il y a un prodige plus étonnant que celui de l'établissement du Christianisme, c'est l'incrédulité de ceux qui refusent de se rendre à l'évidence de ses preuves.

THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

BOOK FIRST.[1]

CONTENTS:

Return of the Disciples from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem—Entrance into the Cenacle—Discourse of St. Peter, followed by the choice of Matthias in the place of Judas—Descent of the Holy Ghost—Gift of tongues—Preaching of St. Peter—Conversion of three thousand persons—The lame man cured at the gate of the temple—Second preaching of St. Peter—Five thousand converted—Peter and John in prison—Council of Priests—Discourse of St. Peter—Silence imposed on the Apostles—Their prayer followed by a new infusion of the Holy Ghost—Sanctity of the first Christians—Barnabas—Ananias and Sapphira—Miracles of the Apostles—Their imprisonment and deliverance by an Angel—Advice of Gamaliel—The Apostles scourged—Murmur of the Greeks against the Hebrews—Election and ordination of the seven Deacons—Stephen full of grace and strength—The Jews dispute with him—He is seized and dragged before the Council—His discourse—His death—Saul consents to it, and holds the garments of his executioners.

Angel of Light! by whom the Psalmist's harp
Was strung to inspiration, and the souls
Of ancient seers with prophecy were fired,
Descend from heaven anew, and guide me, while
The Apostles and their glorious Acts I sing.

(1) From the first to the eighth chapter, inclusively.

From Olivet the Saviour took his flight
Back to the skies, whence he had deigned to stoop,
Clad in the form of mortal, to redeem
The sin-born children of a fallen sire.
Deep clouds enveloped him from earthly sight;
And his disciples, strengthened in their faith,
"Adored Him," though invisible become. (1)
Their charity, enlightened and refined,
Soothed their affliction for the saddening loss
They now sustained; and well they understood
The words he uttered: *If, indeed, ye love,*
Ye will rejoice at this, because I go
Back to my Father. (2) Ceasing to behold
With eyes of flesh, they saw, with eyes of faith,
The Saviour seated on his heavenly throne,
Divine and only Monarch of this world; (3)
Whose wish it is that other thrones be filled
By those who, with him, suffer to the end.

Elate with joy, they sought Jerusalem; (4)
And there abode in that superior room,
Styled Cenacle, where Peter dwelt, and John,
And James, and Andrew, and Bartholomew,
Simon Zelotes, Philip, Matthew, James—
Alpheus' son—and James' brother, Jude.

(1) Luke xxiv. 52. Et ipsi adorantes regressi sunt in Jerusalem, cum gaudio magno.

(2) John xiv. 28. Si diligeretis me, gauderetis utique, quia vado ad Patrem.

(3) Jude 4. Solum Dominatorem, et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.

(4) Luke xxiv. 52

With one accord they persevered in prayer, (1)
With Mary (2) and the brethren of their Lord. (3)

One vacant place remained to be supplied.
Twelve patriarchs, as of old, there now must be.
Peter, invested with primatial power,
Christ's representative—the Church's head,
Or, by a special order of his Lord,
Or, by an inspiration from on high,
Rose, in those days, amid the assembled friends,
And spake aloud, in these prophetic words:
"Brethren, accomplished must the Scripture be
And what the Holy Spirit hath foretold,
By David's mouth, of Judas, who betrayed
Jesus, our Master, on the fatal mount.
He hath been one of us—for the same work
With us associate in the ministry.

(1) They prayed *unanimously* and *perseveringly*. Prayer, unanimity in prayer, perseverance in prayer, three things, which, if united, do violence to heaven. They might have sufficed to draw down the Holy Ghost, even though he had not been promised.

(2) The text mentions the other women also. They had followed Christ in his missions, and had not abandoned him in his passion, and were witnesses of his resurrection, and, perhaps, also his ascension. Being no longer with him, they were with whatever could recall him to their minds—his mother, brethren, disciples.

(3) Who believed in him, convinced by the miracle of his resurrection. We must not confound with them the three who have been named in the verse,—James, son of Alpheus, Simon and Jude, brothers of James, who are styled in the Scripture, brethren of the Lord. These believed before they were called to the apostleship, as it is written that it was among his disciples that Jesus chose his apostles. Luke vi. 13.

A field of wo he hath, indeed, acquired,
Bought with the price of his iniquity; (1)
And, having hanged himself upon a tree,
Down from his ruptured body fell exposed
His entrails pendent to the public gaze.
Yes, all Jerusalem have seen the sight;
And in their tongue the field hath since been styled
Haceldema, which means—the field of blood.
For, it is written in the book of Psalms:
'Their dwelling shall be desolate and forlorn,
And his Episcopate another take.' (2)
Then from our true companions who have stood
Firm to our Master, since the eventful day
When John baptized him, to the glorious hour
Of his departure to his native skies,
One must be chosen to proclaim with us

(1) He acquired, in effect, the field in the only manner in which he could: for, it is believed, that he was the first interred there—as one of the strangers for whom it was intended.

(2) What was foretold and accomplished. But the prediction is turned into an imprecation. There are, in the Psalms, hundreds of similar instances. Charitable persons are sometimes pained to find how much evil is invoked upon enemies and persecutors. But they do not see that the evil is foretold and not desired; but the prediction is changed, as it should be, in poetry, and especially the Psalms, the sublimest of all poetry. We find similar examples in the profane poets, when they announce calamities which were past, but existed not at the time when the personages speak who are brought upon the scene. See Virgil's Æneid, Book IV.:—

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor
Qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos
Nunc olim quocunque dabunt se tempore vires,
Littora littoribus contraria, fluctibus undas
Imprecor arma armis, pugnent ipsique nepotes.

His marvellous resurrection from the dead." (1)
Two were proposed—Joseph called Barsabas,
Surnamed the Just Man, and Matthias; then,
In fervent prayer they sought the will of heaven:—
"O Lord," they said, "who read'st the hearts of men,
Make known to us which of these two to choose
In place of Judas, for the ministry;
And in the apostolate, from which he fell,
That he might go unto his proper place."
He spake, and lots were given in their hands; (2)
And on Matthias fell the choice of God. (3)
Thus was he numbered with the eleven; thus
Prepared the Holy Spirit to receive
In a degree proportioned to his state;
And thus were duly filled the mystic thrones
To which the tribes of Israel should yield.

Now was the vessel of the Church equipped (4)
With Pilot, rudder, sails, and mariners:
One thing alone was wanting: 'twas the breath

(1) Religion is not entirely included in the resurrection, but is founded entirely on that miracle.

(2) This shows that lots may be permitted under certain circumstances. Moreover, the apostles acted here by inspiration, and therefore require no apology. By the Canon Law, (*Cap. Ecclesia, de Sortilegiis, sub finem,*) it has been forbidden to have recourse to such means in the choice of ministers and pastors of the Church. What was good once is not always so; nay, it might even be bad, on account of the abuses it may occasion, and, therefore, it is better never to have recourse to them.

(3) *Two were chosen by the judgment of men; but one was chosen by the Divine judgment.* Aug. *Enarr. in Ps.* 30.

(4) Chap. ii.

Which, like a soul, should move her, and bring out
Her glorious resources in full play. (1)
The hour arrived; the days of Pentecost (2)
Were now accomplished, and all things prepared.
All were assembled in the Cenacle; (3)
When, of a sudden, like a rushing wind,
A noise was heard from heaven—and the room

(1) This is the beautiful idea of St. Chrysostom. *Hom. de Spiritu S.*

(2) A Greek word, signifying fifty days, or the fiftieth day, which amounts to the same. It was a festival of the Jews before a Christian festival. For the former, it was the anniversary of the day on which God gave the law to their fathers on Sinai: and the law commanded them to offer on that day the first fruits of the harvest, according to the rite prescribed in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus. It was only after this offering was made, that they were permitted to apply the scythe to their corn:—a figure of the abundant harvest which was to fall under the scythe of the apostles, and of which the chief of the apostles gathered and offered the first fruits on this day. For Christians, among whom one only oblation has taken the place of all the offerings and sacrifices, Pentecost is the anniversary of the descent of the Holy Ghost, of the promulgation of the evangelical law, and the foundation of the Christian religion. All this was the work of one day, or, it may be said, of one hour. For, according to the narrative of St. Luke, it appears difficult to believe that more than one hour elapsed from the coming of the Holy Ghost to the conversion of three thousand of Peter's hearers.

(3) *All;* that is, at least six and twenty persons, who were present at the election of Matthias. The literal sense induces this belief: and the general opinion does not exclude any who were in the Cenacle with the apostles; neither Mary, nor the holy women. It was for them like the sacrament of Confirmation. The Spirit who *breatheth where he listeth*, communicated himself to all in the measure he willed, and diversified his gifts according to the various ends to which he destined all who composed that assembly.

Where they were seated shook beneath the sound.
Then came there down, and stood upon each head,
Strange tongues, as if of fire, which parted seemed: (1)
And with the Holy Ghost they all were filled,
And all began in divers tongues to speak.

Then were there gathered, at Jerusalem,
Jews from all nations of the earth—good men,
And given to religion: (2) when the noise
Spread through the city of this strange event,
In crowds they hastened to the favored spot,
And heard, each one, the language of their land.
They were beside themselves, and marvelling said:
"Are not these men who speak our various tongues
All Galileans? how, then, doth it chance
That they address us in our native tongues?
For we are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
Mesopotamians, and from Phrygia,
Pontus, Judea, (3) Cappadocia,

(1) It was not, then, real fire. We cannot compare a thing with itself. We cannot, for example, say, that water is like water. The same with regard to the wind. The noise is said to have *resembled* a strong wind: it was not, therefore, wind. In like manner, the tongues had only the brightness and agility of fire. These were symbols by which the Holy Ghost made known his nature, properties, and effects. We may say the same of the Dove, under the figure of which he descended visibly on Christ after his baptism by John.

(2) So called, because it was the duty of religion that had assembled them at Jerusalem.

(3) It would seem that the Jews, inhabiting Judea, should not be surprised to hear them speaking their language. They who are of opinion that that language was different from the one used in Galilee, are mistaken. It is clear, from many texts of Scrip-

Egypt, Pamphylia, Asia, and the parts
Of Lybia bordering on Cyrene's realm,
Strangers from Rome, both Jews and Proselytes, (1)
Cretans, Arabians, all, in our own tongues,
Have heard them speak the wondrous things of God." (2)
And much they marvelled, and, astonished, said
One to the other: What doth all this mean?

ture, that the Jews and Galileans understood one another. The expression of the servant-maid to Peter—*Thou art a Galilean, for thy language betrays thee*—proves this rather than contradicts it: for they spoke together, and understood each other. And what betrayed Peter was not the language, but the pronunciation, or dialect, peculiar to the Galileans. What, then, was the cause of the astonishment of the Jew of Judea? It was this: a Jew who understood the apostles saw by his side a Greek, a Roman, a Persian, who understood them equally. This to him was inexplicable. For, if they speak Greek, or Latin, how is it that he could understand them who knew neither of those languages? or, if they spoke his language, how could others, unacquainted with it, understand them?

By the gift of tongues, the apostles spoke each of the languages of those whom they had to treat with. They understood them when spoken. When they spoke, at the same time, to men of different tongues, they were understood by all; as the sermon of St. Peter proves. But how could this be done? God knows how. We, however, comprehend how an apostle, pronouncing a word in any language, could, through the power of God, be understood. That power could so modify the air that the word might be changed into Greek, for the Greek, and, on striking the Roman ear, into Latin.

(1) *Proselytes*, a Greek word, signifying strangers; or, rather, strangers aggregated to a people. Gentiles, who embraced Judaism, were styled by that name.

(2) When filled with the spirit of God, we can speak of nothing but God. Bad Jews called this intoxication; bad Christians call it fanaticism.

But others mocked them, as if drunk with wine:
Vain men! blaspheming what they did not know.
But soon were they confounded: Peter stood
Encircled with the eleven, and thus spake:—
"Jews, and all ye inhabitants who dwell
Within Jerusalem, lend me your ears.
These men are not, as ye imagine, drunk,
For yet 'tis but the third hour of the day: (1)
But now the prophecy must be fulfilled
By Joel sung of old:—*Thus saith the Lord:*
Lo! in the latter days will I pour out
My spirit o'er all flesh; (2) *then shall your sons*
And daughters prophesy, and your young men
Visions behold, your aged men dream dreams.
Then in the heavens on high, on earth beneath,
Will I make prodigies appear—of blood,
Of fire, and vapor of red smoke; and lo!
The sun to darkness shall be changed, the moon
Turned into blood, before that mighty day.
That day of terror, when the Lord shall come (3)

(1) Nine o'clock. We learn from Josephus that, on feast-days the Jews were accustomed to take no food until mid-day. We know not the special law that bound them to this observance; it was a practice of devotion, but so universal, that to say it was only the third hour, was sufficient to imply that they were yet fasting.

(2) Joel says: *I will pour out my spirit.* St. Peter said: *I will pour out of my spirit;* which seems to signify less. The prophet expresses what was poured out; the apostle what had been received. All which was fulfilled in the first age of the Church; and, during all time, will the Spirit of God be diffused among all nations, without distinction.

(3) It appears that the prophet and apostle both refer to the day of judgment. This is the interpretation of St. Chrysostom. St Peter calls it the *manifest* day; Joel, the *terrible.*

And it shall come to pass, that whosoe'er
On the Lord's name will call, shall then be saved.
On the foundations by the prophets laid,
The apostle rears the gospel-edifice:
Shows that the Lord to be henceforth invoked,
And through whose power salvation is obtained,
Is He who agonized upon the cross.
Impelled by superhuman force, he dares
Proclaim his Master risen: "Israelites,"
He thus again addressed them, "hear my voice!
Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved
Of God among you, by the prodigies
And signs he wrought, which ye yourselves have seen,
But who, by God's determined will, was nailed (1)
By wicked men upon the tree, and slain,
Is risen from the dead—he having loosed

(1) God wished Jesus Christ to suffer all that he did suffer. By his foreknowledge he knew that the Jews would make him suffer precisely as he did: he let them act; and therefore it is said he delivered him to them. The will of God, which issued the decree, was holy and just; the malice of the Jews, who executed it, cruel and detestable. God did not will that malice; but he did not prevent it from acting, because it served to fulfil his designs. Thus an action may be justly willed, and criminally executed God is irreproachable; the Jews are inexcusable.

They who reject the infallibility of the divine foreknowledge are reduced to the necessity of affirming, that God forced the Jews to act as they did. They make God ignorant and wicked.

They who in their adversity do not think of God, who wills it, but regard only the doings of men, are ignorant if they do not know that God wills it; and are wicked if, contrary to the order of God, they hatè the persons who have occasioned it. *The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away,* were the words of Job, although it was Satan who acted against him.

The sorrows of the grave, by whose dark power
It was impossible he should be holden:— (1)
For 'tis of Him the royal prophet sang:
The Lord I set before my face, he is
At my right hand, that I may not be moved.
Therefore my heart exulted, and my tongue
Sent forth its songs of gladness, for my flesh
Will rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave
My soul in hell, nor let thy Holy One (2)
Taste of corruption; thou hast traced the ways
Of life with thy bright finger, and my heart

(1) In Greek, the *sorrows of death; ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου.* We may add, that in scriptural parlance it sometimes means the tomb. Some interpreters understand by the *sorrows* of death, the sufferings, mental and corporeal, of Christ, which he endured to his last breath, but from which he was delivered, as well as from corruption and the other humiliating consequences of burial, from which he was exempt. All this is true, and may be sustained by certain expressions scattered through the text. But there are others which can be understood only of *hell;* not, indeed, of the damned, but those subterranean places where the souls of the just were detained before heaven was opened. This is the language of David, by which St. Paul intends to prove what he advances: *Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell.* Here hell cannot signify the tomb; for on this supposition *my soul* would mean my body! We must, then, recognise two meanings: that his soul was not to be left in *hell*, nor his body in the tomb.

(2) *The Holy One*, by excellence. Calvin and Beza translated thus: *Thou wilt not leave my body in the tomb.* Neither one nor the other believed in his descent into hell.

Before the ascension of Christ, the souls of the dead descended into hell, that is to say, *limbo.* To resuscitate any one, it was necessary to make the body quit the tomb, and the soul, *hell.* We must not, therefore, be surprised at the manner in which David speaks.

Leaps with delight before thy countenance. (1)
Brethren," he added, "let me freely speak:
David, the patriarch, hath long since died,
And to the tomb his body was consigned,—
For to this day his sepulchre is seen.
He was a prophet, and full well he knew
That God had sealed the promise with an oath,
That from his loins should spring, in after days,
One who should sit upon his regal throne:
Thus, with prophetic vision, he proclaimed
Christ's resurrection—triumphing o'er hell,
And seeing not corruption in the grave.
This Jesus God hath raised to life again:
And of the wonder we are witnesses.
Exalted, then, by the right hand of God,
He hath fulfilled the promise, and poured forth
The Holy Ghost—as ye have seen and heard. (2)
For David did not to the heavens ascend;
Yet hath he sung: *The Lord said to my Lord,*
Sit thou upon my right hand, till I make
Thy enemies thy footstool. Let the house
Of Israel, therefore, know most certainly,
That God hath constituted LORD and CHRIST
Him, whom ye doomed to die upon the cross."

(1) Christ always had the *face* of God before him; but his sensible joy was suspended during the time of his passion. He recovers that joy immediately after his death.

(2) *How can He who gives the Holy Ghost, be otherwise than God?* said St. Augustine to the Arians, lib. xv. *de Trin.* cap. 26 *And how great the God who gives a God!* They saw and heard Him by his effects, which rendered sensible his all-powerful operation.

Whilst Peter thus addressed these touching strains,
The Holy Paraclete in silence spake
To the consenting hearts of those who heard.
A lively sorrow pierced them, to have been
The homicides of Jesus,—deep remorse,
Regret compunctive seized them; and they said
To Peter and the rest: What shall we do? (1)
"Do penance," (2) was the answer. With these words
Jesus and John their ministry began,—
"Do penance all, and in the name of Christ (3)
Be ye baptized—remitted, thus, shall be
Your sins, and every one shall then receive (4)

(1) Salvation is near when the heart exclaims: *What shall we do?*

(2) He means the penance that must precede baptism. It consists in the detestation of the past, joined with a firm resolution for the future; to which, according to the Council of Trent, must be added an incipient love of God. This is what theologians call the *virtue* of penance. It is entirely in the heart. Satisfactory works form no part of it, although they will follow when the heart is truly penitent.

(3) That is to say, the baptism instituted by Christ, which derives all its virtue from the merits of Christ, and in which Christ is named as the second person of the Trinity. Some ancient writers, of respectable authority, were of opinion that the apostles began to baptize with this form: *I baptize thee in the name of Jesus Christ.* But this opinion has been abandoned. For Christ gave orders to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which order is too precise and absolute to be changed or dispensed with. There is no positive fact, showing that the apostles ever set it aside. It is to distinguish the baptism of Christ from that of John, that Peter required them to be baptized *in the name of Jesus Christ.*

(4) Sanctifying grace, according to the language of St. Paul:

The Holy Spirit; for to you is made
The promise, to your children, and to those
Who are far off, whomever God shall call."
Yet other proofs he failed not to advance.
Their minds, enlightened first, he next must move;
With earnest exhortation did he cry:
"Flee from this race perverse, and save yourselves!"
About three thousand heard, and, on that day,
All were baptized, and added to the Church. (1)

Such were the first-fruits of the Holy Ghost,
And such the master-pieces of his Grace.
Most perfect of all Christians were these first,
Not only just, but saints of high degree.
With fervent spirits did they persevere
In the apostles' doctrine, and partake
In the communion of the bread, and prayers. (2)

The charity of God is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who has been given unto us. We may also understand the sacrament of Confirmation, which the apostles ordinarily conferred after baptism.

(1) Thus was the Church founded. Christ had made the pastors, the pastors the people, who, when they entered into it, found the government established. The people, then, cannot arrogate to themselves the right of giving pastors, without overturning its primitive constitution. They may contribute to the choice by their wishes and testimony, and, at most, by their presentation. But the choice, properly called, and jurisdiction must come from a higher source. Such was Christianity in its cradle; such will it be to the end of ages.

(2) The Eucharist, according to most interpreters. Others understand the distribution of common bread. The words, *breaking of the bread*, may admit of either sense. The former should be preferred, not only because it is universally followed, but also on

A general fear now came on ev'ry soul:
For many signs and wonders were performed
By the apostles, at Jerusalem.
The faithful, who believed, together dwelt,
And their possessions were in common all: (1)
Their goods they sold, and just division made
To all, as each one needed.—Daily to
The temple they repaired, with one accord,
To pray; and, breaking bread from house to house,
With joy, and great simplicity of heart (2)
They took their meat, with gratitude to Heaven,
Acceptable alike to God and men.
And every day were added, by the Lord,
Numbers to those predestined to be saved.
Still, the last stroke was wanting to the work:— (3)

account of the circumstances with which it is associated. It is natural to suppose that the *breaking of bread*, which is mentioned between two acts of religion, such as assiduity in hearing the word of God and prayer, is rather the communion of the eucharistic bread than the eating of common bread.

(1) This is the most perfect idea of society. Plato had conceived it; but, following the custom of philosophers, who seldom imagine any thing good without mixing with it some extravagances, "the divine Plato" wished all things to be in common, without exception. For the rest, his idea had been deemed impracticable, or regarded as a dream. Behold it here perfectly purified and realized by the fishermen of Bethsaida!

The arm of God has not been shortened. The apostles of the new world established similar communities among the Indian race, to the shame of the most polished nations, which existed more than a century.

(2) Here it is more probable that the *breaking of bread* signifies the manducation of common bread. The expression that follows, *they took their food, &c.*, authorizes this meaning.

(3) Chap. iii.

By persecution must the Church be tried,
Ere it be rendered perfect: Earth and Hell,
As yet both silent and inactive stood;
Whether by terror paralyzed and hushed,
Or chained by the omnipotence of God.

But not of long duration slept the calm:
The powers of darkness, by a grand event,
And wonderful as grand, were roused to arms.
Then was the tocsin sounded—war declared—
And conflict dire commenced, of which the event
Confusion spread among the infernal ranks.
Behold the source from which this warfare sprang:—
'Twas the ninth hour of prayer, (1) and John went up
With Peter to the temple; and there lay
A certain man, lame from his mother's womb,
Hard by the gate-way called the Beautiful,
Imploring alms of those who passed along.
As on the threshold Peter stood and John,
He cried to them for alms: "Look upon us,"
Fastening their eyes upon the wretched man,
They answered. He obeyed; and steadfastly
Fixed his wan gaze upon them, with the hope
That they would, pitying, grant him some relief.

(1) Three o'clock. The Jews assembled in the temple to pray in common, after the manner of our Vespers. It is probable that this prayer preceded immediately or accompanied the evening sacrifice, which was offered daily, according to the ordinance of Moses, in Exodus, chap. ix. It was at three o'clock that Jesus Christ died. *Erat autem fere hora sexta, et tenebræ factæ sunt in universam terram usque ad horam nonam: et obscuratus est sol . . . . . et exspiravit.*

Then Peter said: "Silver nor gold have I, (1)
But what I have that do I gladly give:
Rise, in the name of CHRIST of Nazareth, (2)
And walk!" Extending forth his hand, meanwhile
He raised him from the earth; his limbs were nerved,
And with a bound he leaped upon his feet,—
Stood upright in his strength, and, giving thanks,
Entered the temple with them;—whilst the crowd
Seeing, were struck with wonder, and praised God.
For well they knew the poor lame mendicant,
Who long was wont before the beauteous gate
To sit, and ask for alms: they marvelled much,
Seeing the miracle that had been wrought.
And all the people, with amazement fill'd,
Ran to the porch which is called Solomon's. (3)

(1) The Church now possesses gold and silver, and possesses them legitimately: but men fearing God, and who are the depositaries of that wealth, have sometimes to regret the poverty of the primitive times.

(2) The miracles wrought in the name of Christ were more glorious to him than if they had been performed in person. They proved that the power of Christ was not borrowed, but a power which he possesses as sovereign, and exercises, when he pleases, through his ministers.

(3) So called, as is conjectured, because it had been built by Solomon. Of course, the Babylonians must have spared it in part when they destroyed the temple. When the temple was rebuilt, this portico was repaired and made serviceable. At the time of which we are treating, it was used by the Gentiles who came to adore at Jerusalem. Besides this vestibule, there was another for the Jews, and which all who were not purified were forbidden to enter. The others remained with the Gentiles in the portico of Solomon. Then came the part called the HOLY, which the priests alone could enter who there burned incense on the altar of perfumes, all the people standing without—as appears in

The crowd was great; and Peter did not fail
To profit by the occasion; who addressed,
With strength and sweetness, marvellously blent,
The words that follow, capable to touch
The hardest hearts, and make the stoutest tremble:—
"What, Israelites, do you behold in this
So wonderful? as if, of our own power,
Or of ourselves, we made this man to walk.
No, it was not: the God of Abraham,
The God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
Our fathers' God hath glorified his Son,
Jesus, whom ye betrayed, whom ye denied,
Before the face of Pilate—that weak judge—
Who deemed him guiltless, and would have released
Ye, on the contrary, denied, condemned,
The Holy and the Just One—ye preferred
A murderer before Him—and consigned
To death the Author of all life;—whom God
Raised up again, as we are witnesses.
'Twas faith in His all-potent name that gave (1)
Sound health to this poor sufferer, whom you see,
And whom you know, now perfectly restored."
Their crime so deeply censured, what remained
But to announce its awful chastisement?
Perhaps the Jews were looking for their doom:

the history of Zachary, Luke i. The *Holy of Holies* was separated by a veil, which was rent at the moment Christ expired. The high priest alone had the right to enter there once a year.

(1) In Latin, *fides, quæ per eum est.* Most translators render it, faith *which we have in him;* others, *which comes from him.* The first is more natural, the second more literal; both are good. In Greek: *Καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.*

Perhaps they trembled, at that solemn hour,
Lest the indignant minister of Him,
The Just, the Powerful, whom they had slain,
Should bid the avenging earth beneath them yawn
And bury them in ruin; or call down
Flames to devour them, from insulted Heaven.
But no; they need not fear: from Peter's lips
No curse terrific issued;—words of peace,
Of grace, of hope, and safety, they distilled
In accents bland and merciful. "I know,"
He added, "brethren, yes, I know that ye
Through ignorance acted, and your rulers too: **(1)**
But ye have thereby caused to be fulfilled
What God had promised by his prophets' mouth:
Then be ye penitent, converted be,
That your iniquities may be effaced: (2)

(1) Christ himself seemed to excuse them on account of their ignorance. We must see how, and to what extent, that ignorance could excuse them. They were not ignorant that Christ was innocent, and in this they were inexcusable. But they did not know that he was the true Messiah and the only Son of God; in which they were less guilty than if they had treated him as they did, knowing him in that quality. But was not their ignorance, in this regard, criminal? Yes; because he had given more than sufficient marks to oblige them to recognise it. Yet such was the meekness of Jesus, that, in order to excuse them, it is merely necessary that their malice might have been greater. What an example for Christians, obliged to resemble him in this point as in any other: And what a condemnation of those who, when they are made to suffer, perhaps innocently, the smallest evil, avenge it with atrocious imprecations and implacable resentments!

(2) The conjunction here, both in Greek and Latin, signifies, *To the end that*. It suspends the sense, and renders it incomplete. Nothing better proves the fidelity of the Church in the conservation of the sacred deposite of the Scriptures, than to see

That when the blest refreshment-times shall come
Brought by the presence of the Son of God, (1)
Jesus, the CHRIST, who has been preached to you.
In heaven, indeed, he will abide until (2)
The days of restitution, (3) which the Lord
Hath by his prophet, long ago, announced;
For Moses said: *A prophet shall the Lord*
Raise up among his brethren like to me:
Him ye shall hear according to all things
Which, in his wisdom, he shall speak to you.
And it shall come to pass, that every soul
Which will not hear that prophet shall not live.
These days the holy seers have all proclaimed
From Samuel down through each succeeding age.
Sons of the prophets, and the testament,

that she does not suffer the retrenchment of a single syllable, (*ut*, ἵνα,) which *seems* to be left only to embarrass the sense!

(1) Here, as in many other parts of Scripture, by "refreshment" is meant the bliss of Heaven. The meaning of the text is Do penance, in order to obtain the remission of your sins; that when Christ shall come to judge the world, ye may be found among the just, and be made participators of the joys of Heaven.

(2) He is in heaven in his natural and visible condition; but this does not prevent his being really on earth, concealed under the eucharistic species. This remark is made, because the Calvinists have cited this text against the real presence.

(3) The heavens and earth will be renewed, as St. Peter affirms, 2 epist. iii. 13: *But we look for new heavens and a new earth, according to his promise, in which justice dwelleth.* That is, the order, disturbed by the rebellion of angel and man, will be perfectly re-established: all the good will be happy, all the wicked miserable. God's will then will be accomplished; and all creatures will be held under the absolute and eternal dominion either of his mercy or his justice.

Made to our sires, are ye, when thus God spake
To Abraham: *And in thy holy seed*
Shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
'Tis true that blessing shall to all extend;
But most distinguished shall his children be:
For unto you the promise first is made (1)
That Israel shall be saved: the Lord hath sent
His Son, from death arisen, to impart
His blessings to you all, that every one

(1) Prodigy of fidelity on the part of God. They massacred his only Son: yet, on account of the promise made to their fathers, to them *first* must salvation, brought by his Son into the world, be announced. They will now persecute his ministers, scourge them, stone them, crucify them: nevertheless, mercy is still for them, and during forty years it is held out, but after that term it will be taken from them: *For forty years*, said the Lord, *was I near this generation, and I said, Their heart is astray. They have not considered my ways. But I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into the place of my rest.*

This was said of the race then living, as well as of that which God had led out of the land of Egypt, towards the land of promise, which they had forfeited by their crimes. Of all generations that composed the succession of the people of God, these were the most favored and the most criminal.

Christians, who are more corrupt than infidels—they who, in a holy profession, are more depraved than ordinary men of the world—are represented by these two generations. Let them tremble at these dreadful words: *I have sworn in my wrath, &c.*

It is true that he bore with the first during forty years: but we must not forget that he gave the Ninevites but forty days. His divine justice is not regulated by the understanding of mortals. If he deals more mercifully with some than with others, he does not fail to give all alike the means of escaping the infliction of his vengeance. By repentance and satisfaction his ire may be instantly averted: if the sinner continues to insult him, and perseveres in his iniquities, vengeance will inevitably overtake him, whether it be in the space of forty days or forty years

May be converted from his evil ways."
Language so touching, and so dread withal,
What bosom could resist? Stamped, as it was, (1)
By Heaven's own seal—the miracle achieved
On the lame beggar, in the public gaze—
Five thousand men—it is not given to say
How many women—yielded to the truth.
While yet he spake, and by his side stood John
Adding his testimony, as the crowds
Were gathering still more eagerly around,
Lo! through the portals of the temple rushed
The Priests and Sadducees upon them, grieved
And maddened at the doctrine which they taught,
In Christ, the Resurrection from the dead. (2)
Then were they seized upon, and "put in hold"
Until the morrow, for 'twas waxing late.
Shadows of night were falling from the hills
Upon the temple's gorgeous portico;
And where the tramp of countless feet was heard,
Silence lay musing all the livelong night.

(1) Chap. iv

(2) The Sadducees denied the resurrection. The Pharisees believed it. These opposite sentiments rendered the two sects irreconcilable. But the Pharisees could not endure to hear the resurrection preached in the name of Christ: and hence they united, in this instance, with the Sadducees. So do heretics all unite, no matter how they differ among themselves, against the true Church and her visible head. This coalition has united, for a time, the most discordant errors and opinions, in order to bring them all to bear, in one desperate effort of hostility, against the Church, which condemns them all, and which can hold no communion with sects that have gone out from her, and have attempted to rend the seamless vest of her divine Spouse.

Day dawned anew, and woke Jerusalem:
And o'er the gardens of Gethsemane
The sun's glad beams came dancing from the east;
The hum again is heard through all the streets,
And murmurs thicken round the apostles' cell.
Then met in council chiefs, and scribes, and priests,
And all the ancients—venerable men—
Convened to question the apostles: there
Annas, the High Priest, in due pomp arrayed,
Presided; near his person Caiphas sat,
And John, and Alexander, and all those
Whose veins were warmed by sacerdotal blood.
Before this proud assembly were arraigned
The humble Peter and inglorious John.
They enter: mid that glare and majesty
Did they recoil with terror?—no; they stood
Undaunted, undismayed; for they were now
Filled with supernal strength and light divine.

"Peter and John,"—thus did the pontiff speak—
"Ye preach the resurrection, and have cured
The lame man near the temple; in what name,
And by what power, do ye perform such acts,
And teach such doctrines? Speak, that we may hear."

What answer can they make—these lowly men—
Men once so timid as to shrink with fear,
Not from the princes, but their servant-maids!
Standing sublime amid the assembled priests,
And fired with wisdom from the Holy Ghost,
Peter began: "Ancients and princes, hear:—

If we are questioned by you through what power,
And in what name, we healed the man infirm,
Who lingered on the temple's vestibule,
Then be it known to all now gathered here
Under this dome, and to the people all
Of Israel, that by the name and power
Of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, our Lord, (1)
Nailed to the cross by you, but risen again,
We gave this man, now standing by my side, (2)
Whom well you know, full use of all his limbs.
It was through Him of whom the Psalmist sings:
This stone rejected by the builders,—YOU,
The same the corner's head hath now become. (3)

(1) It was under this name, written in three languages, and fixed on the cross, that Christ was crucified. His enemies gave it through contempt. (Acts, vi.) Yet it is under this name that Peter designates him before his persecutors, and dares propose him as the only object of their faith and hope. The apostles did not temporize with their prejudices, but triumphed over them. They never were ashamed of the opprobrium of their Master, but through it were they raised to those sublime thrones on which they have received the homage of the whole world.

(2) To have seen with their own eyes the infirm man cured in the name of Jesus Christ arisen, was a proof of the resurrection of Christ as decisive as if they had witnessed it. Consequently, if they did not then believe it, neither would they have believed the testimony of their own eyes and of all Jerusalem.

Let us say that they believed, but they did not wish the world to believe; and thus we may reconcile the evidence of the fact with their efforts to obscure it. Knowing what the human passions are, we are not surprised at this contradiction between their light and their conduct.

(3) This prophecy is found in the 107th Psalm. Christ had cited it a little before his passion, (Matt. xxi.,) and the Jews understood that it was of them and of himself that he spoke.

Through Him, from whom alone salvation springs,
For there is given to men no other name,
Beneath the heavens, whereby we must be saved."

He ceased; and mute with admiration sat
The assembly, chained in silence: they beheld
The godlike bearing, heard the strains sublime,
Of men who, but the other day, were low,
And ignorant, and timid; who had been
Associates of the Nazarene in life,
And, since his crucifixion, preached him GOD.
Nor could they aught reply; for sound and whole
The beggar stood before the council, healed
By Peter, through the omnipotence of Christ.

At length the High Priest, rising on his throne,
Perplexed in feature, and in voice subdued,
Bade the apostles from the hall retire:
Who meekly but triumphantly obeyed.

Then, as if freed from some strange influence
Which held them captive, priests, and scribes, and all
The sages of the council,—they began,
In sudden susurrations, to give vent
To their deep-hushed amazement, and exclaimed:
"What shall we do with these most wondrous men? (1)

(1) This expression shows how strong is truth. Wit, science, opulence, authority, are on the side of its aggressors. Its defenders are weak, low, ignorant. Yet, because truth is on their side, they are neither embarrassed as to what they ought to say nor what they ought to do; while their fierce enemies are reduced to ask the question: *What shall we do?* This advantage was the

Wondrous in doctrine—not less so in deed.
Shall we deny the cure which all the world
Hath witnessed in Jerusalem? 'twere vain:
A deed so public vindicates assent,
Defies all cavil, and must be believed.
The object of their power was not far off,
Nor hidden in obscurity, but near
At hand, before the people and ourselves,—
For many a year a sad, familiar wretch,
Grovelling upon the temple's vestibule;
But now he leaps as agile as the doe,
And ceases not to mingle with the crowds—
A speaking testimony of the fact.
This is too true. In order to arrest,
In the incipient germ, this novel sect,
Named after Him styled Christ, let us decree
That, under penalties the most severe,
They shall not dare, henceforward, in that name
Address the people, lest it farther spread."

An inconsistent sentence, yet approved.
The wise and learned oft are sorry dupes
Of human passions; and would *stifle* truth
Which all their jealousy cannot *destroy*.

Great men and proud, accustomed to behold
The lowly cringing at their haughty feet,
Deemed it would be an easy task to check

mere prelude to the great victory which this same truth, weak and unarmed, was about to achieve over the powers of the universe

These men of nothing, who would not presume
Oppose their will, nor dare provoke their ire.
Their fierce resolve determined to enforce,
They bade the soldiers usher in again
The champions of the name and power of Christ.

Behold they enter! gentle as two lambs,
And yet with souls inexorably firm,
They stand in silence, looking, with fixed gaze,
Upon the High Priest, who, with faltering voice,
And troubled accents, thus addressed them both:
"Before this council—mighty and august—
Ye have been ordered to appear again,
To hear the sentence which ye must obey:
No more, at any time, in any place,
To speak of Christ, or in his name to teach."

"Ancients, and venerable priests," replied,
With noble mien, and independence calm,
Peter and John; "to you we now appeal:
Judge ye, for ye are sages of the law,
Doth justice not demand, that we obey
The Omnipotent, in preference to you? (1)

(1) Should there be two masters, one of whom is subordinate to the other, and their wills opposed, their orders contrary, to do the will of the superior master, and execute his orders, is simply to obey. To do the will and execute the orders of the inferior, is not to obey, but to revolt against the common Master. The reply of St. Peter turns upon this maxim, the subversion of which would be the destruction of religion and society. This is so evident that children know it, but interest is so blind that it often disregards it.

Man has within his breast a greater master than any on earth—his conscience; which he must always oppose to the most abso-

What we have seen and heard we preach abroad;
And preach we must what we have seen and heard."

Upon such champions menaces were lost:
Why then repeat them? Yet the priests and chiefs
Hurled them anew against those fearless men.
"Depart," they said, "unpunished; but—beware!"
To punish them they dared not, for they knew
That all the people praised them and admired:
With their own eyes they saw the mendicant,
Who during forty years had crippled lain,
And helpless, now miraculously cured.

Triumphant from the hall the apostles walked,
And hurried to their brethren, whom they told
Of all that passed;—how they had been arraigned,
And what the princes, priests, and ancients said,
To force them into silence, and prevent
Their preaching Jesus risen to life again.
Great was the joy of all; with one accord
They raised their voices in this solemn prayer: (1)
"O Lord! the heaven, the earth, the deep, and all
Whatever they contain, were formed by thee;
They are the works of thy all-potent hand.
'Twas thou didst speak, when, by the Holy Ghost

lute power. If it be objected that God alone is superior to such power, I answer, then, that conscience is the voice of God.

This voice knows how to speak to the most wicked. Hence St. Peter did not hesitate to say: *Judge ye, &c.*

(2) According to the text, all raised their voices—all said the same prayer. Therefore they were inspired: otherwise there would have been a difference at least in the expressions.

Inspired, our father and thy servant David (1)
Cried out of yore: *Why did the gentiles rage,*
And why the people meditate vain things?
Kings of the earth and princes have conspired
Against the Lord, and stood against his Christ.
For in the city, recently, combined
Herod, and Pilate, with the Gentiles leagued, (2)
And with all Israel, against thy Christ—
Jesus, thy holy child—and thus fulfilled
What by thy hand and counsel was decreed. (3)
Upon their menaces, O Lord! look down;
Give to thy servants to announce thy word
With confidence unshaken, (4) inasmuch

(1) It appears that the Jews, when they spoke of David, were in the habit of calling him *our Father*. St. Peter, in his first discourse, styled him the *Patriarch David*, which signifies the same thing. We may remember, also, that when Jesus Christ made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem the people cried out: *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David.* He could have been effectually the father, at least, of the greater part of the tribe of Juda.

(2) Herod had not entered into the conspiracy. It was, as it were, by chance that Jesus was sent to him, and he did not desire his death—as Pilate declared: "He (Herod) did not find in him cause for death." But though he did not *conspire*, yet he *concurred* in the passion of Christ. Derision is associated with homicide; and the scoffer will be punished as the persecutor.

(3) The malice of the Jews was the proximate cause of the sufferings of Christ: his sufferings were the effect of that malice. God willed and determined the sufferings of which they were the effect, but not the malice which was the cause of them.

(4) They had been filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. On this occasion they received a new plenitude, and an increase of graces necessary to bear up against persecution. We have not always actual grace necessary to resist every temptation; but if we ask for it, as the apostles did, it will be accorded at the moment of temptation, and the truth of the saying of St.

As thy right hand will be extended still
Cures to effect, and miracles to work,
Through Jesus, and in his most holy name!"

This prayer ascended to the Almighty's throne,
And marvellous signs were given that 'twas heard:
For, hardly had they finished it, before
The place, where they were congregated, shook
As with an earthquake; with the Holy Ghost
All were replenished, and with confidence
The word of God announced, while, with new strength
Of Jesus' resurrection from the tomb,
The apostles glorious testimony gave.

Great grace now reigned among the faithful; none
Was destitute: for at the apostles' feet
Owners of lands and houses, having sold
All their possessions, laid the common price,
Which, as they needed, every one partook. (1)
Joseph, styled Barnabas, (which signifies

Paul will be verified: *God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength.* (1 Cor. x. 13.)

(1) This community of goods was established, St. Jerome thinks, by St. Mark, in the Church of Alexandria. It does not appear, however, that the apostles attempted to establish it any where else. Perhaps the enterprise did not seem to them practicable. God, who does not call all men to the same degree of perfection, wished this, no doubt, to be the distinctive character of the first of all the churches.

To the honor of the Church, however, be it said, there have been always individuals who have followed this perfect life. Such are those religious men, among whom all things are common. They resemble the first Christians of Jerusalem.

The Son of Consolation,) in the Isle
Of Cyprus born,—a Levite,—sold his lands,
And, faithful, to the apostles brought the price.

But yet, so wayward is the human heart, (1)
Deceit and vice—like serpents amid flowers—
Into this sanctuary of the virtues crept.
The glory of Disinterestedness
Foul Avarice affected, with the hope,
By imposition, to obtain its prize.
The scheme was thwarted; for the hate is such
Of God against deceitful, double hearts,
That even in the reign of grace and love
He signalized his vengeance by a stroke
As terrible as those he dealt of old,
When ruled the law of rigor and of fear.
Leaving, thereby, this warning: if He be
The God of Mercy, yet is He, not less,
(As we shall learn,) the God of Justice, too.

A certain Christian, Ananias named,
Together with his wife, Saphira, sold (2)

(1) Chap. v.

(2) Had Ananias made a vow of poverty, or not? Interpreters are divided. All the ancients are in the affirmative; and if we consider that this was the opinion of such men as Sts. Athanasius, Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, &c., how can any doubt remain? What makes it more probable, is the word used in the Acts, *by fraud*. If he had not made a vow, there could have been no fraud in the transaction. His field, and the price of it, belonged to himself. He could have disposed of it at his will. What *fraud*, then, could he have been guilty of in sacrificing a part of it to the wants of his brethren? Far from sinning, he

A field, in concert, and retained, by fraud,
Part of the price; the other part he brought
And duly laid before the apostles' feet.
But Peter read his heart, and in these words
Addressed the trembling culprit: "Ananias,
Why hast thou yielded to the wily art
Of Satan? why allowed him to seduce
Thy soul from virtue?—tempting, thus, the Lord,
And basely lying to the Holy Ghost.
Thy land is sold, indeed, but of the price
Thou fraudulently hast retained a part.
Before the land was sold, was it not thine?
And since, wast thou not master of the price?
Why then conceive imposture in thy heart?
Thou hast not lied to mortal, but to God." (1)

He spake; and Ananias, as if riven
By the red lightning-flash, fell down and died.
All the bystanders looked aghast, and shuddered.

would have done a good work: less than if he had sacrificed the whole, but yet good and meritorious according to the sacrifice made. In this case, we cannot clearly see on what was founded the reproach of St. Peter, and why the chastisement was inflicted. But if Ananias had consecrated all his goods to the Lord by an irrevocable promise, all is explained. He committed a *fraud*, he lied to the Holy Ghost, he deserved death; God is just, and his minister irreprehensible.

(1) After having said to Ananias, Thou hast lied to *the Holy Ghost*, St. Peter adds—*to God*. Therefore, as the fathers argued against Macedonius, the Holy Ghost is God. He had lied, in an equal manner, to the Father and the Son: it is by appropriation that he is said to have lied to the Holy Ghost, who is called by Jesus Christ, *the Spirit of truth*. (John, xiv. 17.)

The young men, rising, bore away the corpse,
And, filled with dread, consigned it to the earth.

Three hours elapsed, and lo! the wife appears
Of Ananias, ignorant of his doom.
As she drew nigh, "Woman," the apostle said,
"Tell me, for so much did you sell the lands?"
"Yea, for that price," she answered, "and no more."
"'Tis false; and, woman, why have ye agreed
To tempt the Spirit of the Lord together? (1)
Behold, the young men who have just interred
Thy husband—they are standing at the door:
And they shall bear thee likewise to thy grave."
She fell, that instant, and gave up the ghost. (2)
The young men laid her near her husband's side.
The hopes of hypocrites—thus Job declares— (3)
Shall perish with them: yea, instead of fame
They sought, through perjury, to gain, and fraud,
They have brought down confusion on their names,
And on their memory opprobrium stamped.

This prodigy of terror stood alone;

(1) They tempted the Spirit of the Lord, because they thought that St. Peter would not have any knowledge of their fraud Among those who had witnessed the profusion with which the Holy Spirit had spread himself over the apostles, it was a kind of infidelity to believe that they had not received the gift of prophecy; and it is written: *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*

(2) Porphyry, one of the most subtle opponents of Christianity, charges St. Peter with a crime, on account of the rigor he here exercised. But he forgot that it was God who struck the blow The words of Peter were but a signal for it.

(3) *Spes Hypocritæ peribit.* Job, viii. 13.

Whilst, without number, favors were bestowed.
Wonders and signs were, by the apostles' hands,
Performed among the people; with one soul,
Upon the porch of Solomon, they met— (1)
Where others durst not venture to intrude—
Hailed by the acclamations of the crowd.

Meanwhile, of those who in the Lord believed.—
Women and men—the numbers daily swelled.
Then might be seen, along the streets, the sick
Stretched on their beds and couches, to the end
That Peter's shadow, as he passed along,
Might fall upon them, and their health restore. (2)
And multitudes, from all the neighboring towns,
Flocked to Jerusalem, bringing their sick,

(1) According to some, this means that many of the faithful kept at a distance, either through respect for the apostles, or for fear of bringing persecution upon themselves. Others think that it includes only those who did not believe; who, either through fear or disrespect, did not mingle with the faithful. The first interpretation should be preferred.

On the porch of Solomon the apostles ordinarily assembled, because it could contain a great multitude; because, constituting no part of the temple, strictly called, they could announce the word of God to all persons—men, women, Jews, infidels, &c.; because they did not interrupt the ceremonies and sacrifices that were going on in the interior. The Church sprang from the bosom of the Synagogue, and the ancient temple was its cradle.

(2) We have noticed constantly, that, on all important occasions, it was *Peter who spoke*, thereby showing his authority, which was recognised by his brethren. He must also have been recognised as the chief of the apostles by the people. And for this reason it was, no doubt, that God desired the gift of miracles to be exercised by him more conspicuously than by the others.

And those tormented by the unclean spirits:—
The sick were healed, the infernal victims freed.

Such wondrous deeds the nation's chiefs aroused:
They could not view the marvellous success
With which the apostles taught, without despair.
If this new doctrine be not checked, at once,
In its triumphant progress, then farewell
To all their credit, influence, and power!
Which would they quietly resign?—while crowds
On crowds were pressing round the fishermen!
What must be done?—The High Priest seems to wake
As from a torpor; fired with jealousy,
Aided and stimulated by his sect, (1)
(For they were Sadducees,) he rested not
Till on the apostles they laid hands again,
Who in the public prisons were immured.
But what is human power, when his right arm
The Omnipotent extends to avenge his cause!

'Twas now the midnight hour: the earth was hushed:
But Peter slept not in the dungeon-gloom;
To heaven his watchful orison went up,

(1) It was remarked before, that the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead. This sect had a two-fold interest in preventing the preaching of the apostles: for they preached in the name of Jesus, and taught a doctrine which it rejected. We must be convinced how rotten were the foundations of religion and state, when the chief of the priesthood, and the first man of the nation, did not blush to be the partisan, or, at least, the fautor of materialism!

Appealing there for justice and support.
Heaven heard the prayer: the massy prison-gates
Fly open of a sudden; light intense
Breaks in upon them and dispels the gloom.
When lo! an angel of the Lord appears,
And, pointing to the portals, bids them rise,
And go their way in safety and in peace:—
"Stand in the temple, on the morrow; preach
Undaunted, unsubdued, the word of life."
'Twas done: they went; and as the earliest dawn
Blushed on the temple, they were preaching Christ.

As day advanced, in council met again
The ancient men of Israel, and dispatched
Back to the prison, guards; who, when the gates
On their rough hinges were swung open, found
No prisoners in the cells. Breathless, with fear,
They hastened to the council, and declared,
That, as commanded, to the prison-gates
They went; which were well fastened, and without
The sentinels were duly at their posts;
But entering, they found no man within.
These tidings thrilled with wonder and surprise
The chief priests and the ancients. "Can it be?"
They muttered to each other. "Are they loose,
Despite the brazen locks and sleepless guards!"

"Yes, they are preaching; I have just now been
Up to the temple;"—thus a stranger cried,
Who chanced to enter. "Since the break of morn
They have been there—these very men whom ye

Secured in prison, as ye deemed, last night,—
Teaching the multitudes that flock to hear."

Thither the officers, forthwith, repaired;
And, as the stranger told, upon the porch
Stood the apostles, teaching; whom the guards
Led to the council back: but violence
They dared not offer, lest the indignant crowd, (1)
Roused to revenge, should stone them in their wrath.

Once more in presence of the assembled chiefs
And sages of the law, the apostles stand:
With haughty tone, but yet with anxious mien,
The High Priest spoke: "Already, more than once,
Our mandate has been issued, and despised:
Did we not bid you never in that name, (2)
Which ye assume, to teach? Still ye persist,
And all Jerusalem is made to ring
With your exciting doctrine; sworn, 'twould seem,
To make that man's blood fall upon our nation."

Sternly did Peter and the apostles hear
The High Priest's language, and thus made reply:

(1) They would have done it, if the apostles had called upon them for defence. But Peter and John would not excite the people against the public authority, although unjust.

(2) They did not mention Christ. Was it through disrespect, or—I know not what—secret terror which it awakened, or their remorse! They said: Do not preach in this name, because it injures us. Beautiful reasoning! Not because there was not sufficient evidence of the truths announced through x. They once called down his blood upon their nation: they now fear it, and soon will feel the consequences.

"Not men, but God's high will must we obey."
Thus all exclaimed; but Peter, towering forth
Pre-eminent above his peers, and fired
With inspiration, glowing in his breast,
Proceeded: "Jesus, whom ye doomed to die,
Fixed to the cross, hath triumphed over death,
Raised by our fathers' God to life again:
Our Prince and Saviour He, whom, by his power,
The Eternal hath exalted; and through Him
Repentance and remission are bestowed (1)
Of past iniquities on Israel.
These are the glorious things of which we yield
Due testimony, with the Holy Ghost,
Whom to his faithful servants God hath given." (2)

This fearless language, and these truths sublime,
With preter-natural energy expressed
By Peter, and enforced, roused up the wrath,
Inflamed the vengeful passions, of the chiefs,
And cut them to the heart: death they resolved
Forthwith to inflict, and thereby seal their lips
In silence everlasting; when that God
Who ever on their sacred destinies,
With providential watchfulness, looked down,

(1) No one can repent except by his grace; and the remission of sins, which is the consequence, can be obtained only through his merits.

(2) The testimony of the apostles, and that of the Holy Ghost, are considered as two distinct testimonies; because the apostles had seen Jesus Christ resuscitated, and the Holy Ghost attested, by the miracles he wrought through them, the truth of their testimony

Chose from the ranks of their worst enemies,
A vindicator of their cause and persons.
This was a Pharisee, Gamaliel named, (1)
A doctor of the law renowned and wise,
Known to the people, and by all esteemed.
He, while the council sat in fierce debate,
Requested that the prisoners, for a time,
Should be commanded to withdraw: 'twas done.
When thus ingenuously he began:
"Beware, O Israelites, how ye proceed
Against these men; with solemn caution act.
For, ye remember, how, some time ago,
Appeared a certain Theodas, (2) who claimed
Extraordinary power, and professed
To be a mighty personage, round whom
Rallied, as followers, four hundred men.
But he was slain; and all his partisans

(1) It is not said that he was imbued with their false doctrines, or guilty of their vices; but he held their belief with regard to the resurrection: whence he was considered a Pharisee. Such, also, was Nicodemus, and some others, who were not infected with the leaven of the sect. Was Gamaliel a secret disciple of Christ, or did he then open his eyes to the truth? Of this we are doubtful, and his discourse does not inform us.

(2) Josephus speaks, in his third book of "Antiquities," of a certain Theodas, who gave himself out as a great prophet, against whom Caspius Fadus, then governor of Judea, sent an army, who slew him, with many of his partisans. This happened in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius. This fact embarrasses commentators; because this epoch is many years posterior to the discourse of Gamaliel. Nevertheless, it is certain that Gamaliel cited this fact under the present circumstances; that he cited it to men as well informed as himself, who, instead of contradicting him, agreed with him: wherefore, it could not be called in doubt.

Were dissipated, and reduced to nothing.
Judas, the Galilean, next appeared,
About the epoch of the enrolment: (1) he
Drew after him great numbers; but, at length,
He also perished; his disciples, too,
Were scattered. Hearken, then, to my advice:
Cease to pursue these men—let them alone;
For if their work and counsel human be,
Soon will it crumble of itself; but if
From God it come, you never can destroy it.
Pause, therefore, pause: for, mayhap, in your zeal,
You may be found warring with God's designs."

Sage was this counsel; yet, not sage, in truth,
Had there not been some probable conjecture
That this great movement was the work of Heaven.
The right to change Religion rests in God,
And rests in God alone—its author He.
Fain, then, should they have carefully inquired
Whether or not it was His work: if not,
Justice demanded—human and divine—

(1) This may be the enrolment which took place at the birth of Jesus Christ; or another, made eight or ten years later, when Archelaus ceased to reign in Judea. One of the motives of Augustus in ordaining this, was to impose a capitation tax on his subjects. As the Jews were daily looking for the Messiah, many of them would not submit to this exaction. Judas, of Galilee, was at their head, and was killed. A principle of sedition was, however, left in the public mind, especially among the Galileans, many of whom preferred to suffer death rather than pay the tribute to Cæsar. This was the occasion, at length, of the general revolt, which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the people.

That they who furthered it, should be, at once,
Checked in their rashness, and thus safe preserved
Religion and the State: the former touch,
And the foundations of the latter shake.
But if the finger of Omnipotence
Marked out the origin of this emprise,
Then, to oppose it, was to war with Heaven;
And the pretext of guarding, saving all,
Would be the cause of losing every thing.
Now, 'twas to this examen (what more just?)
Gamaliel bade the council turn their minds.
And this, by his wise eloquence, he gained.

But not unpunished went the apostles: no,
They must be scourged, their mission sealed with blood.
And then, again, all reeking from their wounds,
Summoned to hear the council's last decree:
"Never, in any manner, preach the name,
Or doctrines, of their Master, Jesus Christ."

With joy the apostles left,—too honored they
Reproach to suffer in His blessed cause.
But did their zeal relent? or was their spirit
Chained by the tyranny of cruel men?
No; like a flame, which for a while may be
Repressed and stifled, then more fiercely burns,
And spreads more widely,—thus glowed forth their zeal.
For every day, not only as before
Around the temple did they preach of Christ,

But in the public places—through the streets—
In private houses—every where, they taught,
And every where the gospel they announced.

But men—alas! how true!—are always men: (1)
And, as a garden, be it e'er so well
And highly cultured, needs some fostering hand,
Industrious and skilled to prune or plant,—
So in communities, how pure soe'er,
Deficiencies are found to be supplied,
Extremes, with timely care, to be retrenched.

Among those people who, thus far, possessed
One spirit and one heart,—that Christian band,
Of whom the soul was charity divine
And love fraternal,—there began to creep
Insidious divisions: that pure source,
From which their union flowed and harmony,
Became polluted, and the stream of peace,
Troubled by passion, changed its limpid course.

As, in those days, with rapid growth increased
The number of believers, there arose
Among the Greeks, against the Hebrew Jews, (2)
A general murmuring and loud complaint,

(1) Chap. vi.

(2) Greek Jews were those born in the region where the Greek language was spoken, as well as those born in Judea of Greek parents. The Hebrew Jews were the natives of Judea, who spoke, not the pure Hebrew tongue, but a medley of Hebrew and Chaldaic, which their fathers brought from their captivity in Babylon

Because their widows, in the daily act
Of ministry, were passed neglected by:
An equal right, for them, they justly claimed
To a proportion of the common fund. (1)
To whom, amid these feuds, did it belong
Peace to restore in the distracted fold,
And every breach of charity repair—
To whom, but the apostles? They, straightway,—
The watchful twelve, the guardians of the flock,—
Convened in council all their brethren, whom
With monitory words they thus addressed:
"'Tis not becoming, nay, nor just, that we
Should leave the ministry to which we're called,
The awful ministry of preaching forth
The word of God, the doctrine of our Master, (2)
To do the service of the table; no, (3)
Let others for this function be ordained.
Wherefore, my brethren, cast your eyes around,
And from your number, with due caution, choose

(1) Some interpreters are of opinion, that the cause of discontent grew out of the little consideration shown the Greek widows during the distribution of the funds. This explanation is not probable, however. These women were *neglected* in the ministration—that is, they did not receive any of the goods which were considered the property of all, no matter of what nation, who embraced Christianity. We see how early and fatal was this national prejudice.

(2) The administration of ecclesiastical property belongs to the bishops, as well as the ministry of the word. They may here learn what they ought to do through the agency of others, and what of themselves.

(3) Others should be appointed to distribute the necessaries of life, food, raiment &c

Seven good men and irreproachable—
Men filled with wisdom and the Holy Ghost—
And charge them with 'this business:' whilst we,
Devoted to the ministry of the word,
Will give ourselves continually to prayer."

To this, unanimous assent was given,
By all the multitude; and, having weighed
The various virtues, merits, qualities,
Of not a few, enlightened from above,
They made their choice: Stephen, a man of faith,
And animated with the Holy Ghost; (1)
Philip, Nicanor, Parmenas, Prochorus,

(1) Stephen is known all over the world. The most celebrated after him, was Philip, who baptized the Eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. He also converted, by his preaching and miracles, a great number of Samaritans, among whom was Simon Magus. He had four daughters, virgins and prophetesses. The name of Evangelist was given him, (chap. xxi.,) which means only one who announced the gospel. The Church celebrates his festival on the 6th of June. The four others are venerated as saints. Nicholas is the only one whose name is not in the Roman martyrology; which circumstance leaves unsettled the question which divided the ancients, whether or not he was the author of the sect of Nicolaites, of which mention is made in the second chapter of the Apocalypse. The epithet, *proselyte*, which is annexed to his name, shows that he was a gentile before his conversion to Judaism. As the seven have all Greek names, it would appear that, by their choice, every subject of complaint on the part of the Greeks was removed. Whatever some theologians may have thought, the imposition of hands, joined to prayer, effected a sacred ordination. This is the common sentiment adopted by the Church, who, in the ordination of deacons, prays to God that the candidates *may be made worthy of the rank and order to which Stephen, with his companions, seven in number, was raised by the choice of the apostles.*

Timon, and Nicholas, a proselyte
Of Antioch—these were the favored seven:
These were presented to the apostles, who,
With fervent prayer, on them imposed their hands.
Thus was there added to the growing Church
Another sacred Order. Whilst the first
For all the ministerial wants sufficed,
It was not needed: with the increasing flock
Increased those correspondent wants, for which
Co-operators were required and chosen;
The service of the table gave these birth—
Service, o'er which presided, heretofore,
The apostles—of whose functions this the least:
From this relieved, from other cares exempt,
And seconded by new "Evangelists,"
Wider and wider did they spread the Word,
Greater and greater conquests did they make
Among the people of Jerusalem.
Nor yet alone among the people; priests,
In wondrous numbers, yielded to the faith—
Bowed down their reason, once so stern and proud,
Before the glorious mystery of Truth.
They had consented to the death of Christ;
Who, for his executioners, breathed forth,
With his last sigh, on Golgotha, a prayer,
Of which the efficacy now is felt. (1)
They own their error, and they wail their crime—
First in the Synagogue, least in the Church.

No human combination should be deemed—

(1) St. Chrysostom. *Hom.* 14, *in Acta Apostol*

Nor offspring of mere human policy—
This new-formed order; heavenly in its birth,
Its institution sprang from God himself,
And with a holy character was stamped.
That in the public mind no doubt should lurk
Regarding its true nature, with success,
Bright and triumphant, was the preaching marked
And signalized by Stephen, first of Deacons.
With grace, and its attendant strength, replete, (1)
Marvels he wrought, and signs unparalleled,
Among the people: he conspicuous stood,
Before the jealous eyes of these same men
Who, failing, or by cruelty or bribe,
To hush and vanquish the apostles, turned
Towards him their weapons, with a force combined.
A noble victim! an immortal witness!
Whose unquenched light still, after years of gloom
And desolation, shines upon the Church.

Against the influence of this wondrous man,
The synagogues of the three parts of earth—
A memorable fact—arrayed their power:
That of the "Libertines," (2) and that of the
Alexandrians and Cyrenians,

(1) Replenished with *strength*, because he had been with *grace*: man, left to his own strength, is but weakness.

(2) *Libertinorum*; meaning *freed-men*. These were Jews born at Rome, of parents who had been slaves, but were set at liberty. Augustus assigned them a quarter of the city, beyond the Tiber, where they might dwell and practise their religion:—perhaps the very quarter now allowed their descendants, in the same capital, by the liberality of the popes.

Those from Cilicia and Asia,—all (1)
Leagued, in unanimous efforts of dispute,
His doctrine to subvert, his cause to check.
But idle was the assault; for, by his mouth,
The Spirit spake with wisdom so profound,
They could not answer, nay, they stood amazed,
Pale with confusion, and dared not resist. (2)

To other weapons, more effectual far
Than those of argument, they had recourse:
Weapons most fatal: for no ægis may
Cover their victim from their poisoned shafts.
Aim them at Innocence, and lo! she bleeds:
At Virtue, and she droops her lovely crest
In agony intense. Religion's heart
By them, full oft, hath been transfixed; her HEAD
Could not escape;—meek victim to their rage.
Such were the weapons Stephen must encounter:—
Malignant slander, calumny perverse.

False witnesses were daringly suborned,
Who, with perfidious hardihood, averred,
That he had uttered words with blasphemy

(1) Asia Minor, now Natolia, a mere province of Asia, one of the quarters of the globe. He disputed against men from the three quarters; against those from Asia, against the Cyrenians and Alexandrians from Africa, and the Libertines of Rome, from Europe. Others have to dispute with the fourth quarter.

(2) We here behold the accomplishment of the promise which Jesus Christ made to his disciples, that it would not be they that should speak, but the Holy Ghost, who should speak through their mouths, (Matt. x. 20,) and that he would give them wisdom, which their enemies could not resist or contradict. (Luke xxi. 15.)

'Gainst Moses, and the God of Moses, fraught. (1)
The breasts of all took fire: Ancients, and Scribes,
And people, rising with impetuous zeal,
Seized upon Stephen, and a prisoner dragged
That glorious Levite to the council, where
The charge calumnious was urged anew:
"This man,"—the base traducers thus deposed—
"Incessant speaks against the Holy Place,
And Israel's law assails: with our own ears,
And more than once, we heard the menace drop
From his unhallowed lips, that time should be,
When Jesus—he of Nazareth—would destroy
The consecrated temple, and lay low
In dust the glory of Jerusalem. (2)

(1) If he had blasphemed against Moses, he would have blasphemed against God, the author of the mission of Moses. But this was a manifest calumny; for there can be no doubt that he spoke of Moses according to the principles of Christianity. Now, any Christian, who knows his religion, far from speaking against Moses, regards him as the greatest man, and, perhaps, the greatest saint, of the ancient testament.

(2) Jesus was called, the *Man of Nazareth*, in derision, in order to render him contemptible to the Jewish people.

These false witnesses brought against Stephen, not his own words, but the sense which they gave them, and the consequences they drew from them. In this respect, they were false witnesses. In order to be true witnesses, they should have reported his own terms, and an equitable judge would have examined their natural and literal meaning. The holy Levite might have said, that the new law which he announced was the perfection, but not the destruction, of the ancient law: he might have declared that Jesus Christ had predicted the destruction of the temple and city, but not that Christ himself would be the destroyer of them. Time proved that He who made this terrible prediction was Divine. All the circumstances were so minutely specified—the abomination

That then our worship should be done away—
The worship of our fathers—and the old
Traditions of our nation should be charged."

Amid these charges, gentle and serene,
Smiled, in his innocence, the holy man,
Before the council. By this evidence
Emboldened, not convinced of Stephen's guilt—
For 'twas a mere pretext to blind the crowd—
The ancients rose, their sentence to pronounce
On the blasphemer, when behold! his face
Like a sweet angel's face to them appeared!
A halo shone around his placid brow;
And thus transfigured, silently he stood.
Spell-bound, at first, and powerless to speak,
The council eyed the marvel; when, at length,
The High Priest broke the silence that ensued—
A breathless, fearful silence—in these words:
"The charge of blasphemy, by numerous men
Alleged against thee, Stephen, thou hast heard:
Art thou, then, guilty? Is it so? Explain;
Make thy defence; for we will hear thy voice."

Then, like an inmate of the heavenly world (1)

desolation in the Holy Place—the ploughshare of destruction that passed through the streets—the famine, pestilence, and ruin, that ensued—the dispersion of the Jews, and the cessation of their sacrifice—all conspire to prove that Jesus was the Messiah; that the religion he instituted was the completion and perfection of the ancient law; and that he was, indeed, the Son of God, as the Centurion exclaimed, when Jesus expired on the cross of Calvary.

(1) Chap. vii.

Arrayed in glory, beamed upon their view
The holy Levite, while he thus began:
"Brethren, and venerable fathers, hear:
Ere yet our father Abraham had left
Mesopotamia's land, to dwell in Charan, (1)
To him the God of majesty appeared,
And said: *Forth from thy native country go,*
And from thy kindred, to a distant land,
Which I will shew thee. From Chaldea, then,
Bidding farewell to all the heart most loves,
Obedient he departed, and abode
In Charan: whence, after his father slept,
God bade him pass into this very land,
Wherein ye now are dwelling: not a foot
Of ground was given, no inheritance,
To him, at first; but God the promise made
That he should have possession, and his seed
Who were to come, though yet he had no child. (2)

(1) Now Diarben, or Diarbekir, a region situated between the Tigris and the Euphrates. It is said, in Genesis, that Abraham was then at Ur, in Chaldea, a province bordering on Mesopotamia, properly so called. But as there are authors who give a greater extent to Mesopotamia, and others to Chaldea, Moses could have said, in the sense of the second, that Abraham was then in Chaldea; and, according to the first, St. Stephen could say that he was in Mesopotamia. We find some other apparent discrepancies between the account given by Stephen, and that of Moses, but they are not more embarrassing than this one.

(2) Abraham has well deserved to be styled the Father of believers, and nothing is more just than the expression of St. Paul: *He hoped against hope*, (Rom. iv.) For he believed he would have a son by Sarah, when by age they were both placed beyond the condition of having children. He believed that the country in which he was not to possess a foot of ground, would become the



Rebecca at the well.

God then declared: *That his seed should sojourn*
In a strange country, that they should be brought
Under the yoke of bondage, and be doomed
To suffer misery, four hundred years. (1)
And I will judge the nation, said the Lord,
Which they shall serve: and when these things shall cease,
They shall go out, and serve me in this place.

"The covenant of circumcision, then,
Was given to Abraham, and he begot
Isaac; whom, eight days old, he circumcised.
Jacob was born of Isaac, and from him,
As from their stock, sprang the twelve patriarchs.
These, urged by jealousy, their brother sold—
The gentle Joseph—who was carried off
To Egypt; but the Lord was with him there,

inheritance of his children; and obliged to believe that his posterity would obtain it, he was nevertheless obliged to believe that they would be slaves and wanderers during four centuries. Man is so much under the dominion of the senses, that nothing appears more incredible than that which has against it every sensible appearance: and we may say, in this particular, that what Abraham believed was more difficult to be believed than the Trinity. Zachary, who did not doubt the mystery of the Incarnation, doubted, in the first instance, that of himself and his wife, both so far advanced in years, a child could be born.

(1) St. Stephen numbers four hundred years. Moses (Exodus, xii. 40) and St. Paul (Galat. iii. 17) four hundred and thirty. The latter compute from the departure of Abraham into Egypt, when famine obliged him to go and seek for the means of subsistence out of the land of Canaan: the former from the birth of Isaac, with whom commences the posterity of Abraham, which was the object of the prophecy.

And rescued him from all his tribulations.
Endowed with wisdom from on high, he found
In Pharaoh's presence, favor—Egypt's king—
Who placed him ruler over all the realm,
And over all his house. Now, through the land
Of Egypt, and the land of Canaan,
A wasting famine came: misery wide
Extended; tribulation swept abroad;
And our forefathers were deprived of food.
When Jacob heard that still much corn was left
In Egypt, thither he deputed first
Our fathers: and again, a second time;
When Joseph knew his brethren, and revealed
Affectionate, his kindred to the king.
And sending for his father, thither went
Jacob and all his kin, in number five
And seventy; (1) who died in that strange land,
He and our fathers: whence they were removed (2)
To Sichem, and were buried in the tomb

(1) Moses mentions seventy, including in the number Jacob, Joseph, and those of his children who were born in Egypt. The Septuagint agrees with St. Stephen, without counting Jacob, Joseph, and his children: but it is more than probable that they included the wives of the patriarchs, who passed into Egypt with their husbands. Following this mode of computation, the numbers are exact, and no contradiction exists.

(2) They carried them—not Jacob himself, who was buried in the double cavern which Abraham had purchased, with the adjoining field, from Ephron Heteen, to be used as his sepulchre (Gen. i.) In the Old Testament, mention only is made of the translation of the bones of Joseph; nevertheless, it is certain that the remains of all his brethren were carried away and laid in the tomb at Sichem. This St. Stephen affirms too unequivocally, to admit of any doubt. The tradition is general among the Jews; and St.



Joseph before Pharaoh.

Which, for a sum of money, Abraham bought
Of Hemor's sons, who was the son of Sichem. (1)

"And when the time ordained by God drew near,
For the fulfilment of his promise made,
With solemn pledge, to Abraham, then began
To multiply the people, and increase,
In Egypt, till another king arose,
Who knew not Joseph; he, with crafty power,
Our race afflicted, and oppressed our fathers,
Compelling them their infants to expose,
That they might perish, thus, and be destroyed.

"At this sad juncture, mid these fatal woes, (2)

Jerome declares, that he saw at Sichem the tombs of the twelve patriarchs, which were still shown in his time.

(1) It was not at Sichem, but near Hebron, and opposite Mambre, that Abraham bought the sepulchre in which he was interred, and also Isaac and Jacob, as we have seen. Yet, we do not read in Genesis, that Abraham purchased a field at Sichem: but that he purchased a part of the field of the children of Hemor, the father of Sichem, and there raised an altar; (Gen. xxiii.;) that he passed by Sichem, and raised another there, (Gen. xii.–xiii.) Now, we have only to suppose that Abraham had bought, as Jacob did, the place where he erected the altar at Sichem, and St. Stephen will not be opposed to Moses. If it is objected that it is not probable that Abraham bought all the places on which he raised altars, we answer, that what he might not have ordinarily done, he might have done once. And if there were circumstances when Abraham might erect an altar in a field without being obliged to purchase it, there might have been others when the proprietor would not have suffered it.

The truth of the Scripture, taken in its totality, is entirely independent of these little difficulties, whether they can be immediately resolved or not.

(2) Here properly commences the apology of St. Stephen. As

Moses was born—acceptable to God.
Three months beheld him in his father's house,
Where he was nourished; afterward, exposed,
By Pharaoh's daughter he was snatched from death,
As her own son adopted, and was taught
The wisdom of the Egyptians; and he grew
Mighty in words, and marvellous in deeds. (1)

"Now, when twice twenty years had passed away,
The thought came in his heart—auspicious thought—

yet he had answered nothing of which he had been accused. Why, then, this long preamble? We do not see the reason clearly, and what is now added is mere conjecture. They who spoke of religion in the assembly of the Jews, began by briefly referring to the origin of their history—as the vocation of Abraham, the rescue from Egypt, the conquest of Chanaan, &c. This method might have had its utility, which it is not necessary here to explain. This was their ordinary exordium, which they brought down to the particular point they intended to treat. This, I repeat, is but a conjecture, and it rests on the method followed by St. Paul. (See chap. xiii. of the Acts.) He had to prove to the Jews of Antioch that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah. The proof begins only when he speaks of David, to whom God had promised that the Messiah was to be born of his blood. Nevertheless, he starts from the origin of the Hebrew people, and runs over their history, from their departure out of Egypt to the choice which God made of David, as successor of Saul.

(1) We will see lower down, (verse 35,) that St. Stephen reproaches them with having slighted the mission of Moses on this occasion. God must, consequently, have attested it by some miraculous sign, which obliged them to recognise it. We do not read, however, that Moses had performed any miracle as yet: but is it not understood in the words *powerful* in word *and deeds*?—the very expression which St. Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, uses to express in Jesus Christ, the power of working miracles. (Luke xxiv. 19.)



The Finding of Moses.



Moses in the Land of Midian.

To go and see the sons of Israel,
His brethren, held in bondage, and opprest.
Of these, when any one he chanced to know
Unjustly treated, him, with noble pride,
Did he defend, and vindicate his wrongs,
By felling the Egyptian to the earth. (1)
He deemed his brethren now had understood
That God had chosen him to break their chains,
And free them; but they understood it not.
Upon the morrow, when they were at strife,
He stood among them, and effected peace,
And reconciliation: 'Men,' he cried,
'Forget not ye are brethren; why not, then,
Agree among yourselves?' But little recked
The aggressor his peace-offering; with disdain
Repulsing Moses, '*Who*,' he sternly said,
'*Hath constituted thee our prince and judge?*
Wilt thou kill me, as yesterday thou didst
Lay the Egyptian prostrate?' Moses fled,
And in the land of Madian abode,
A stranger, and two sons he there begat.

"Years passed, meanwhile: a period expired
Of forty summers, when, beneath a bush
Flaming with fire, amid the desert vast

(1) He did this legitimately; for he did it by Divine inspiration, as St. Augustine thinks. We find in the ancient testament some inspirations of this kind; and it would be impiety to deny them or censure them. The evangelical law does not permit similar deeds. Ours is not the law of retaliation, much less of persecution; but of peace, meekness, patience, forbearance, and hope. *Beati pacifici.*

Of Sinai's mount, the angel of the Lord (1)
Came down before him: at the marvellous sight,
His bosom throbbed with wonder; and, as nigh,
More closely to consider it, he drew,
The voice of God fell on his startled ear:
The God of all thy ancestors am I:
Of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob!
With terror filled, Moses durst not behold.
Take off thy sandals from thy feet, the Lord
Again addressed him, trembling; *for the place*
Whereon thou standest now, is holy ground.
The affliction of my people I have seen,
Their groaning in captivity have heard,
And am come down to free them. I will send
Thee into Egypt, their deliverer. (2)
This Moses they rejected, with these words:
Who hath appointed thee our prince and judge?

(1) He who is here called the *angel of the Lord*, is, in another verse, styled *the Lord*. This has given rise to two opinions, which have divided theologians. Some have thought, that he who spoke to Moses was the Son of God, who is called by Isaiah the *angel* of great wisdom. Others are of opinion, that it was literally an angel, who is called Lord, because he represented the Lord, and spoke in his name. The second is the more general opinion. *God*, says St. Paul, *who, in sundry times and in divers manners spoke, in times past, to the fathers, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son.* (Heb. i. 1.) From which it would appear, that it was the exclusive privilege of the evangelical law to have been announced by the Son in person.

(2) God, by his immensity, is every where present. He can, therefore, neither descend nor ascend, nor, in any way, pass from one place to another. Hence, when it is said in Scripture, *I have descended*, or, *I will ascend*, it means that he will make his presence visible on earth.

Him God sent forth in quality of Prince,
And Saviour, by the angel's flaming hand,
Who did speak with him from the burning bush.
He brought them out with wonders and dread signs,
Wrought in the land of Egypt, the Red Sea,
And in the desert, during forty years.
This is the self-same Moses, who declared
To Israel's children: *God shall, one day, raise*
To you of your own brethren, as myself,
A prophet; him shall you receive and hear. (1)
This is the same who, in the Church, amid
The wilderness, was with the angel bright,
Conversing with him upon Sinai's brow
And with our wondering fathers; and received
The words of life, to be conveyed to us. (2)
Our fathers disobeyed him, and their hearts
Yearned back for Egypt; and they said to Aaron:

(1) In reporting the interview of God with Moses, St. Stephen said enough to give his accusers to understand that he was not opposed to Moses, since he admitted the divinity of his mission. Nevertheless, it might have been objected that, to substitute another legislator in his place, was equivalent to destroying his legislation. This objection he answers, or rather, he anticipates it, by mentioning the prophecy of Moses, who announced another legislator, to whom God required the people to be obedient, under pain of incurring his vengeance. It was not, then, speaking against Moses to announce, in his own words, a new legislator, to reject whom would be to make Moses a false prophet.

(2) *Words of life;* that is to say, the law of God, which gave life to all who observed it. Some understand temporal, some eternal, life. We must only remark, that the ancient law procured directly, and of itself, only temporal prosperity; and that eternal happiness, to which they who observed it attained, could be merited only by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Make gods to lead us on ;—we know not what
Hath chanced to this man Moses, who hath led
Our nation out of Egypt—he is lost ;
What hath become of him we cannot tell.
A golden calf, accordingly, they made,
And to that idol offered sacrifice ;
Rejoicing in the work of their own hands.
And God turned from them his propitious care,
And gave them up to serve the host of Heaven ; (1)
As it is written in the prophet's book :
O house of Israel ! was it to me
That thou didst offer victims, forty years,
And sacrifices, in the desert ? No ; (2)
The tent of Moloch to yourselves you took, (3)

(1) The stars and planets, which were among the first objects of idolatry. Afterwards, people decreed divine honors to men of extraordinary character, who had signalized themselves by great actions, or benefits conferred on their race. These two kinds of worship seem to have been united by attributing the names of these men to the stars and planets, which were, and are still, called Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, &c.

(2) They offered sacrifices to God in the desert, when the Eternal gave the law, when Aaron was consecrated with his children, and when the tabernacle was dedicated. The sacred Scriptures do not make mention of any others. This fact, joined to what has been said, induces the belief, that the sacrifices that were instituted then were not to be carried into effect until the Israelites should be established in the land of promise.

(3) If we can believe the ancient monuments, cited by able critics, Moloch was the god Mars, and Rempham, Saturn. Rempham is mentioned but this one time in the holy writings. Moloch occurs in many places, and is called the god of the Ammonites. It was in honor of this divinity, who delighted in human blood, that parents consigned to the flames their little children. With this barbarous practice the Almighty often reproaches the Israel-

And the bright star of Rempham, figures which
You made to adore, idolatrous ;—and now
Will I transport you far from Babylon."

Thus far was Moses proudly recognised
By Stephen, charged with blasphemy against him :
More glorious testimony ne'er was given,
In language so magnificently plain.
Next of the holy temple he discoursed,
To which he paid high homage ; since he owned
In terms equivalent, that David formed,
By inspiration, the superb design,
Which Solomon achieved : yet must he show—
And showing, disabuse the Israelites
Of their erroneous doctrine and conceit—
That to their temple—built by human hands—
Worship was not essentially confined.
And thus the Levite his discourse pursued.

"The testimonial tabernacle, traced (1)
By God's own finger, in the wilderness
Our fathers had, which Moses was required
To fashion after the celestial form
Which he had witnessed ; this our fathers all

ites, who, from their long sojourn in Egypt, became the servile imitators of their inhuman persecutors, and did not scruple to imbrue their hands in these unnatural sacrifices.

(1) The tabernacle *of the testimony*, or of the declaration of the Divine will ; which, perhaps, includes, and has reference to, the tables of the law, principally ; according to the following words, spoken by the Almighty to Moses *The ark in which thou shalt place the testimony I will give unto thee.* (Exod. xxv. 21.)

Received, and bore, with Joshua at their head,
Into the land of Gentiles, whom the Lord
Scattered before them. Down to David's days
The tabernacle lasted; who found grace
Before the Lord, and longed a spot to find
Whereon a tabernacle to erect
Worthy the God of Jacob. This design
By Solomon was executed: he—
Munificently wise—the temple reared.
But not in houses built by mortal hands
His dwelling makes the Eternal: *The high heaven,*
As sang, of yore, his prophet, *is my throne,*
The universe my footstool: what house, then,
Can ye build for me? or where can ye find
A place for my repose? Are not all things
The world contains created by my hands?"

Thus calmly downward in his narrative
Glided the speech of Stephen. On the crowd
Of eager listeners slight effect was wrought:
Hardened they seemed, and desperately stern.
He read their hearts; when, bursting from his mood
Of quiet reasoning, with a tone sublime,
Of zeal indignant, thus he fulmined forth
Reproaches terrible: "Ye Jews in name,
But stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart
And ears! the holy Spirit ye resist,
As did your fathers, alway, so do ye.
By them which of the prophets hath not been
With persecution visited? and they
Who, of the coming of the Just One told,



Death of Achin

Were slain: He hath appeared upon the earth;
Ye His betrayers and His murderers are.
And ye to whom, by angel-hands, was given
The law, have trampled it beneath your feet." (1)

He ceased: but deep into their very hearts
His language cut: they gnashed, with rage, their teeth.
Amid their fury, his meek eyes were raised
Steadfast upon the heavens; where he saw
The glory of the Lord, at whose right hand
Stood Jesus: heeding not their threats, he cried:
"I see the heavens open on my view—
On God's right hand the Son of Man I see!"

Forthwith, as if convicted now, at length,
Of blasphemy most foul, they shrieked aloud
Confusedly, and stopped their ears, as though
Insufferably shocked, and driven by rage
Impetuous, on him fell with one accord;
And dragging him without the city-walls,

(1) The fire that glows in these words does not exclude from them a very strong and urgent argument against the Jews. It is this: your fathers have always resisted those who spoke to them on the part of God. You resemble them in this particular. You must believe him; or, at least, fear him. Do not permit yourselves to be carried away by a precipitate ardor, which, under the appearance of zeal, might be a headstrong resistance to the Divine will. His discourse tended to the same point as that of Gamaliel, but in a different direction. Gamaliel repressed their fury in part: Stephen, more vehement and impassioned, excited all the venom and hatred which were festering in their impenitent hearts.

Beneath a shower of stones they crushed the holy
man. (1)
The executioners their garments laid—
That he might guard them—at the feet of SAUL,
A young and ardent zealot in their cause.
Tottering beneath a volley of dense stones,
And weltering in his blood, the Levite prayed:
"Lord Jesus, whom I see, receive my soul!"
Then, reeling on his knees, with a loud voice,
To Heaven for mercy on the Jews he cried· (2)
"O Lord, lay not this murder to their charge!"
Breathing forgiveness with his last deep sigh,

(1) St. Stephen saw, with his bodily eyes, the humanity of the Saviour—God, by a miracle, having rendered it visible. It is difficult to determine what he saw, and what is here styled the *glory of God*. One thing is certain, that he did not behold the Divine Essence in itself, since St. John declared afterwards, *that no man had seen God*. (John i. 18.)

In many parts of the Scripture it is said, that Jesus is *seated* at the right hand of God. This signifies his equality with the Father—the eternal repose that has succeeded to His labors in this life. In this instance He appears to Stephen, standing, in order to support His champion, and to crown him.

The law ordained that the blasphemer should be stoned, and that his accusers should throw the first stones. (Deuter. xvii. 7.) They laid aside their garments, in order to be more free.

Stephen was stoned before any judgment had been pronounced. The fury of the mob broke through all law: and this was one of the many cases in which the Roman magistrates could not check or prevent the tumultuous outbreaks of the Jewish populace.

(2) Jesus addressed the same prayer of pardon and pity for his crucifiers, to his eternal Father, just before he expired on Calvary. What a striking difference is here presented between false zeal, which produces stubbornness and cruelty, and true zeal, which is founded on charity! The first massacres; the second invokes forgiveness on the murderer. Zeal is the most noble of all vir-

Calmly he slept and sweetly in the Lord.
Covered with wounds, the martyr's body lay
Stretched on the sward. But round the relic pressed
Men fearing God, who, with religious care,
Removed the body, and, with funeral pomp,
And mourning deep, consigned it to the tomb. (3)

tues, and, at the same time, the most exposed to illusion: as the most precious metals are the most liable to be subject to alloy or to imitation.

(1) By this *great mourning* is meant, not only grief and tears, and other expressions of regret, but it likewise implies the funeral honors that were paid to the remains of the venerable Levite.

BOOK SECOND.[1]

CONTENTS:

Persecution of the faithful—Conversion of the Samaritans—Simon the Magician—The Eunuch baptized—Conversion of Saul—Peter cures at Lydda Æneas the paralytic, and resuscitates Tabitha at Joppe—Apparition of an Angel to Cornelius the Centurion—Vision of St. Peter—Cornelius instructed and baptized, with his family—Peter gives the reasons for his conduct—Preaching of Barnabas and of Saul at Antioch, where the faithful take the name of Christians—Herod puts to death James, the brother of John—Peter delivered out of prison by an Angel—Death of Herod—The Holy Ghost ordains that Barnabas and Saul should be chosen to preach to the Gentiles—The Magician, Bar-Jesu, struck blind at the words of Paul—Conversion of Sergius Paulus—Discourse of Paul in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia—Blasphemy of the Jews—Persecution excited by them—Conversion of the Gentiles.

Saul to the death of Stephen gave consent: (2)
Nay more, by taking to his special care
The garments of the murderers, he must be
Reputed an accomplice in their deed
Of cruelty and sin. Upon the stage—
Destined a place so glorious to hold—
For the first time appears this "Jew of Jews."
Descended from the tribe of Benjamin; (3)

(1) From the ninth to the thirteenth chapter, inclusively

(2) Chap. viii.

(3) *Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to the law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the Church; according to the justice that is in the law, conversing without blame.* (Philipp. iii. 5, 6.)

And I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. (Galat. i. 14.)

According to the law, a Pharisee ;
In zeal, a persecutor of the Church ;
In outward justice, irreproachable ;
Excelling his coevals of his race,
In Jewish lore, and scrupulous regard
For the traditions of his ancestors.

A speaking portrait, traced by his own hands ;
Wherein the germ of all his virtuous deeds,
And all his rashest, too, the source is found.
Great probity, with innate ardor joined,
Must, or a furious persecutor make
Or an apostle, of the truth—as known.
One and the other, in a high degree,
Was Saul of Tarsus—but the former first.

Now, in Jerusalem, against the Church
A general persecution raged : the Jews,
Emboldened by success, through all restraint
Burst, in their vengeance ; all her ministers,
Save the apostles, were dispersed abroad
Through Samaria and Judea. Saul
Havocked the mourning Church ; from house to
house,
Maddened with zeal, he ran, dragging away
Both men and women, who were doomed to pine
In prisons, whence they ne'er emerged again,
Unless apostates by constraint—or else
To be encircled with the martyr's wreath.
Men's malice oft subserves the work of Heaven :
Christ's ministers dispersed throughout the land,

Roaming from place to place, the word of God
Announced: of these, the first—since Stephen's death—
And chief of Levites, Philip stood confest:
The void he filled—the vacancy supplied—
With zeal intense, and signal gifts bestowed
By Providence, still watching o'er his Church. (1)

Philip went down to Samaria, where (2)
He preached Christ to the people, who received
Attentive what he taught them; and he did
Astounding miracles, driving from some
The unclean spirits, which, at his command,

(1) It was stated above that the apostles did not fly. The Church required their presence: and though Christ had told them, when persecuted, to flee from city to city, he had likewise reminded them that a good shepherd must expose his life for his flock. Up to this period the Church was confined to Jerusalem; where they continued for some years, as in the cradle and centre of religion.

(2) Samaria was the name of a country and a town, the capital of the country. It was built by Amri, king of Israel, destroyed by Hircanus, and rebuilt by Herod the Great, who, in compliment to the Emperor Augustus, gave it the name of Sebaste, which is a Greek word synonymous with Augustus.

When Jesus Christ sent his apostles upon their first mission, he forbade them to enter the towns of the Samaritans. (Matt. x. 5.) He made an exception, in his own person, when, at the entreaty of Sichar, he tarried with them two days. (John iv.) The prohibition was removed when, after his resurrection, he declared that they should be witnesses of him in Jerusalem, in all Judea, *in Samaria*, and the furthermost parts of the earth. This last clause did not then express, with precision, the vocation of the Gentiles, but referred to the Jews scattered over the world. The admirable vision of Peter, which will hereafter be described, was the first unequivocal demonstration of the designs of God in this particular.

Departed from their victims, with loud shrieks.
Numbers of palsied men and lame were cured,
And gladness through the wondering city spread.

A certain man, whose name was Simon, dwelt
At Samaria: he, by magic art,
Seduced the people, who reputed him
A mighty personage; upon his lips
All hung enrapt, the greatest and the least.
"He is," they flattering cried, "the power of God,
Which is called great." For, by his magic deeds,
He had bewitched them. But that witchery
Melted away before the burning words
Of Philip, who, with eloquence divine,
Proclaimed God's kingdom: in the name of Christ,
Many, both men and women, were baptized:
Simon himself among them; who believed,
And clung to Philip; for he saw, amazed,
The unprecedented marvels which were wrought. (1)

These joyous tidings reached Jerusalem,
And solaced the apostles; who, straightway,
Deputed Peter to the new-baptized
And John; these, coming, joined in fervent prayer,

(1) Many of the holy fathers, judging from the promptitude with which Simon received baptism, were of opinion that he feigned to believe: but the text simply says, "he believed." The miracles performed by Philip might have been sufficient to enforce conviction: but the desire to be able to exercise an equal power, seems to have been his only motive in embracing the truth; and thus may it be said, that he believed and did not believe.

That they the Holy Spirit might receive: (1)
For he, as yet, had not come down upon
The neophytes, who, in the name of Christ,
Had been regenerated: they imposed
Their hands, and all received the Holy Ghost. (2)

When Simon saw the apostles lay their hands,
And thus confer the Spirit, he would fain
With gold have purchased that rare privilege: (3)
"Sell me," he said,—"behold the price—this power
That whomsoever my hands rest upon,

(1) This was not an act of authority on the part of the apostles but the result of common deliberation. They *sent*, signifies that they judged proper that Peter and John should go to Samaria.

(2) They had received, in baptism, the spirit of sanctification, but not of strength, or the other gifts that accompanied confirmation: for, in this imposition of hands, all antiquity has recognised the sacrament of Confirmation. Nothing is said of holy chrism, concerning which theologians differ. Some affirm, that the apostles made use of it. Others think that, by a special privilege, they dispensed with it. In either case, the anointing with chrism has ever since been regarded as necessary—as theologians term it, *necessitate sacramenti*.

Baptism makes the Christian: confirmation perfects him. The eagerness with which the apostles administered it to the neophytes, shows its importance. To neglect to receive this sacrament is sinful: what is the sin of those who, charged with the administration of it, leave the faithful deprived of so great a gift!

(3) All the world knows, that from this sacrilegious offer, the traffic of sacred things has taken the name of Simony. Simon was the first of heresiarchs; and the most part of the heresies of the first three centuries flowed from him. Every heretic then merely added his own notions to a mixture of Christianity and Platonism. Peter announces the chastisement which he deserved, which might have been averted by timely and sincere repentance.

On him the Spirit shall descend." To whom
Thus Peter: "With thee let thy money perish!
With gold the gift of God may not be bought.
In our high ministry nor part hast thou
Nor lot; for in His sight, who knows all things,
Thy heart is wicked: wherefore, for thy guilt
Do penance; and, in humble prayer, beseech
The Omnipotent forgiveness to vouchsafe.
Perhaps he still may pardon thee—perhaps!
For in the gall of bitterness art thou (1)
Bound in the shackles of iniquity."

These words struck terror into Simon's heart,
Shuddering, but not converted: "Pray," he cried.
"Pray ye to God, that from my guilty head
He may avert the evils ye announce,
And spare me, spare me, from His menaced wrath." (2)

The duties of their ministry fulfilled—
Their testimony given—the gospel preached—
Back to Jerusalem they bent their way,
Proclaiming, as they went, the word of God.

The merciful designs of Heaven appeared,

(1) *Perhaps;* for the dispositions of the heart are always uncertain: if they are certainly good, pardon will assuredly be obtained for sin, no matter how enormous. But Simon's heart was *in the gall of bitterness;* that is to say, poisoned with malice.

(2) The prayers of just men avail much, whether on earth or in heaven; but we must not neglect to pray on our part. If we trust entirely to the prayers of others, and neglect to offer our own, they will be of no benefit to us.

By gradual development, displayed;
For, in the person of a single man,
Another nation to the faith was called:
Of this the instrument whom God ordained
Was Philip. Lo! a vision breaks upon
His lonely meditations; and a voice—
An angel's voice—commands him to arise:
"Go towards the south, and towards the way that leads
Down into Gaza from Jerusalem— (1)
Desert and unfrequented." He departs.
And, journeying on remotely, he beheld
A chariot passing; in which sat a man
From Æthiopia, a Eunuch high (2)
Of Candace, the queen; one who had charge
Of Æthiopia's treasures, and had come

(1) Gaza had been anciently a city of the Philistines, the gates of which were carried off by Sampson, and in which he caused many thousands to perish. Alexander the Great took it after a siege of two months, and laid it in ruins. In the neighborhood, a new town was built, to which the same name was given. Of the first mention is here made; and hence the epithet *deserted*, which is applied to it.

(2) Eunuch, in its origin, signifies simply an officer of the palace. Candace was queen of that part of Africa now called Abyssinia. Of this region the Eunuch was the first apostle; and the words of the Psalmist were accomplished: *Æthiopia shall be the first to raise her hands towards God.* (Ps. lxvii. 32.) If he was not by origin a Jew, he must have been, at least, a proselyte, since he came to adore in the temple, and was engaged in reading the holy Scriptures. Because he practised what he knew, God bestowed on him a knowledge of the gospel; and in his person was realized the declaration of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, (i. 17,)—*The justice of God is revealed from faith unto faith.*

To adore, with others, in Jerusalem,
And homeward was returning. He appeared—
Reclining in his chariot—absorbed
Reading Isaiah. "Haste," the Spirit said,
"Draw near the chariot." Philip obeyed;
And, running, heard the Eunuch reading loud
The prophecies, and thus accosted him:
"What thou art reading dost thou understand?"
Unless some one explain it, he returned, (1)
How can I understand? And he desired
The stranger to come up and sit with him.
The words of Scripture which he read were these:
Even as a sheep to slaughter he was led;
And as a lamb before his shearer stands
Without a voice, he opened not his mouth.
In his abasement, judgment was removed.
His generation no one shall declare,
Because his life is taken from the earth. (2)
"Of whom, I pray thee, doth the prophet speak—
Or of himself, or of some other man?"

(1) A good Protestant would have given a very different answer. For it is a fundamental principle with him, that any individual can understand the Scriptures, and interpret them, *without note or comment!* The Eunuch felt his deficiency, and acknowledged the necessity of having some one to show him the true meaning of the obscure passage upon which he happened to be meditating on his way. Let us avow our incapacity to understand the sacred writings. Are we wiser than St. Augustine? And yet that most learned and venerable doctor of the Church did not hesitate to affirm, *that in the Bible there was more that he did not know, than that he knew.* "In sacris Scripturis multo plura nescio, quam scio." (Epist. 119.)

(2) Isaiah, liii. 7, 8.

A question with sublime importance fraught:
Opening the portals of celestial light,
Through which, inspired, the Levite traced the path—
The glorious path—of Truth, revealing Him—
Jesus—to whom all prophecy referred,
And whom Isaiah pictured in the words
The Eunuch sat perusing. As they rolled,
Conversing, onward, near a stream they came:
"Lo! here is water; since it is ordained
That man be born again, say, is there aught
To hinder me from being now baptized?"
There is no hind'rance, if thou dost believe,
Responded Philip; *but, with all thy heart.*
"I do believe," the Eunuch humbly said,
"That Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God."

The chariot, then, was ordered to stand still;
And both, alighting, went into the stream, (1)
Where, as the waters rippled round their feet,
The Eunuch stooped his head, and was baptized.

Then, instantaneous, Philip disappeared:
No more the Eunuch saw him—from his side
Snatched by the Spirit of the Lord away.
But he went on—in faith still more confirmed—

(1) St. Jerome speaks of this stream, which was called the Fountain of the Æthiopian: it is on the way from Jerusalem to Gaza, near Bethsura. We must suppose that Philip had explained to him the principal duties of a Christian. His profession of faith includes every thing. For, to recognise Jesus Christ as truly the Son of God, is to confess, equivalently, that we must believe all that he has taught, and do all that he has commanded.

Rejoicing in the blessing he had found.
Philip was carried to Azotus far, (1)
And traversing the country; as he passed,
Preached to the cities Christ of Nazareth,
Until at Cæsarea he arrived.

By gradual steps the Eunuch had been led— (2)
With gradual light he issued from the shades
Of Judaism, to Faith's meridian day.
These are the ordinary ways of God;
Whose works, in nature, as in grace, commence,
Progress, advance, till they, at length, attain
Perfection. But not always is this law
By Providence enforced: from it, whene'er
He wishes, for high ends, he derogates,
And, by a signal stroke and sudden, wields
The violence of mercy—crushing down
The most rebellious wills; subjecting hearts,
Which seemed unconquerable even by Grace.
Such was the stroke of mercy which laid low
The pillar—strong and lofty—of the Jews:
Which smote the persecutor, and he rose
A glorious apostle!—which achieved
An individual conquest, that prepared
The conquest of the universal world.

(1) An ancient town of the Philistines, between Gaza and Cæsarea. This last-mentioned city was anciently called the Tower of Strato, situated on the Mediterranean Sea, different from that surnamed *Philippi*, from Philip, the son of Herod, who had built it in honor of Tiberius Cæsar The former lay at the foot of mount Lebanon.

(2) Chap. ix.

Saul, who, as yet, was breathing violence (1)
And threats against the followers of the Lord,
Went to Damascus, with due letters armed,
Given by the High Priest to the synagogues; (2)
Empowered, if in that city he should find,
Women or men, professing this new faith,
To bring them prisoners to Jerusalem.
Upon this errand hurrying, lo! in sight
Appears Damascus; where he burned, ere long,
To glut his zeal impatient in the woes
Of guiltless Christians; when the heavens serene
Were suddenly with wondrous light illumed,
Whence rays of glory shot upon his sight
With brilliancy intense; dazzled, he fell
Down from his smoking steed; when on his ear
A voice of thunder pealed: "O Saul, O Saul!
Why dost thou persecute me?" Terrified,
"Who art thou Lord?" he answered. "I am
Christ,

(1) The same name as that of the ancient king, though differently pronounced by us. The proper pronunciation is *Saoul;* a trifling consideration, but, as referring to so great a man, not unworthy of notice.

(2) Damascus was formerly the capital of Syria. The Jews there were very numerous, for there were many synagogues. Those of Jerusalem had no authority in that city, which was subject to a strange prince. It appears, however, that the ordinances of the chiefs of religion were executed, either because the sovereigns of the country accorded the privilege, or because they paid for it. What was the fanaticism of the young Hebrew, who, not content with persecuting the faithful in Jerusalem, receives authority to carry his fury into distant places! And how magnanimously did he not atone for his error, in his succeeding career!



Conversion of Saul.

Whom thou art persecuting. (1) It is hard
Against the goad to kick." (2) Trembling still more,
"Lord!" he exclaimed, "what wilt thou have me
do?" (3)
The Lord replied: "Rise; to the city haste,
Where thou shalt learn what thou wilt have to
do." (4)
And they who followed him were filled with awe,
Hearing the voice; but no one could they see. (5)

(1) They who, in any manner, persecute virtuous men, may here learn whom they attack.

(2) A metaphor derived from the goading of oxen, which, if they kick, only irritate the driver, and multiply their wounds These words imply some resistance in Saul, either actual or passive. It is not impossible that even while he was persecuting the faithful with so much fury, he must have had some rays of light, which occasioned feelings of remorse: but he was unwilling to recede after having gone so far. We are often driven by one act much farther than we intended to go.

(3) The conversion of St. Paul is comprehended in this short sentence. If you make use of the same language, O penitent hearts! you may hope for all things.

(4) And yet St. Paul tells us, in his Epistles, that he had no master but Jesus Christ. That is, he learned, by a revelation from Christ, what he was to know as an apostle, and what he should teach others. But what, as a catechumen, and for his own sanctification, he was to know, he learned from Ananias. In the affairs of salvation, men should be directed by men. The law is general. Even those who are charged with the public instruction, are not exempt. Unhappy he who imagines that he is sufficient for himself!

(5) Here it is said they heard the voice. In the 22d chapter of the Acts, St. Paul, in relating the history of his conversion, declares that those who accompanied him did not hear the voice therefore the voice they are said to have heard, must have been that of Saul; and this prevents any contradiction. They had good reason to be alarmed. They saw the light, and Saul hurled

Saul rose, obedient; but could not proceed,
For he was blind: they lead him by the hands,
And brought him to Damascus, where, three days,
He saw not, ate not, neither did he drink.

Meantime, a true disciple of the Lord
Dwelt at Damascus, Ananias named.
He, in a vision, heard the voice of God
Calling upon him: "Ananias!" Who,
With docile heart, "Lord, I am here," replied.
"Arise, and to the street called Strait, repair;
And in the house of Judas thou wilt find
A man named Saul, of Tarsus, for behold
He prayeth." (That disciple entering in
Saul saw in spirit; who upon his eyes
Putting his hands, their sight conferred anew.)
"Lord, I have heard by many of this man,"
Responded Ananias; "he hath done
Much evil to us in Jerusalem:
And from the chief priests he hath power, e'en here,
The saints to imprison who invoke thy name."
The Lord said to him: "Rise up, go thy way;
A vessel of election is this man—
Among the Gentiles he shall bear my name,
To Israel's children, and to mighty kings;
And I will show him what he must endure." (1)

to the earth, terrified, humbled, palpitating with awe, and heard him conversing with some one they did not perceive.

(1) Christ seems to speak of the future sufferings of his new apostle with glory. As if he had said: The persecutor shall be persecuted; and, after having been so infuriated against me and

He went his way; and, entering the house,
Upon the penitent imposed his hands, (1)
And said affectionately: "Brother Saul,
Jesus, our Lord, who did appear to thee
Upon thy journey, bade me hither come
To heal thee of thy blindness, through His power,
That with the Holy Ghost thou mayest be filled." (2)

He spake; and from the opening eyes of Saul
Scales fell, and he beheld the light again;
And, rising, was baptized. He ate, and strength
To all his limbs returned—peace to his heart;
That peace which grace bestows, and converse pure,
Such as with the disciples, many days,
He held, while at Damascus tarrying.

mine, he will undergo, for my cause, more trials than he inflicted evils upon others.

(1) This imposition of hands was not confirmation, as Calvin affirmed. Ananias was neither an apostle nor a bishop; and, supposing he was, he would have confirmed Saul before baptizing him. It was merely to cure him of his blindness that Ananias laid hands upon him—fulfilling the promise of Christ: *They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and these shall be cured.* (Mark, xvi.)

(2) He received the plenitude of the Holy Ghost in baptism. There is no doubt that, being so perfectly converted, he received, with the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, who, as the principle of all sanctity, had already dwelt in him. But, in baptism, he received a more abundant measure: probably, as much as the apostles received on the day of Pentecost—God, who associated him to their apostleship, having willed that the Holy Ghost should be given to him, as to them, without any human ministry. In so extraordinary a vocation, extraordinary means do not surprise us. It is certain that Christ appeared to him in person, that he might also testify to his resurrection: *And last of all he was seen also by me, &c.* (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

No time he lost; but to the synagogues
Hastened to preach Jesus, the Son of God.
But all who heard him were amazed, and said:
"Is not this he, who, in Jerusalem,
Pursued, with vengeance, those who dared that name
Invoke? Did not he, with the same intent,
Come hither, authorized to bind in chains
All he should meet, and drag them to the priests?"
But Saul recked not their murmurs: waxing strong,
More vehemently he announced abroad
Jesus, affirming that this is the Christ.
Such was the glorious reparation made
To Him—the Son of God—whom, in his saints,
Saul long had persecuted: such the scene
Before the world triumphantly displayed;
Marvellous to men—agreeable to God.
From which withdrawing—his first duty done—
Into Arabia Saul bent his way. (1)
Whence, afterwards, (how long remains concealed,)
Back to Damascus he returned, to endure
Evils unnumbered for the cause of Christ.
The Jews consulted how to cut him off,
Revengeful of his change: by bribery lured,
Or urged by calumny, or forced by threats,
The nation's governor, who held command
Under Aretas, caused the city-gates

(1) *But when it pleased him . . . to reveal his Son to me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood; . . . . but I went into Arabia, &c.* (Galat. i. 15, 16, 17.) By some it has been thought, that God called him into a solitary life, in order to prepare him for his apostolic functions. After some time, he returned to Damascus.

To be well guarded, that he might be seized.
But the conspiracy was known to Saul,
And cautiously eluded: whilst the watch
Was, night and day, set on the brazen gates.
Amid the gloom and silence of the night
He was, with dexterous artifice, conveyed
By his disciples on the outer wall,
Whence, let down in a basket, he escaped. (1)

Back to Jerusalem Saul now returns.
How changed from him—the terror of the "saints"—
When for Damascus he departed thence!
Now in the holy city he appears—
A new apostle of the truth—to see
The Chief of all the faithful and the Head—
Peter—with whom he tarried fifteen days. (2)
Of all his other colleagues none he met,
Excepting James, the brother of the Lord.
The faithful viewed, with wonder diffident,
This neophyte; doubt mingled with their joy:

(1) *At Damascus, the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands.* (2 Cor. ii. 32, 33.)

(2) *Then, after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I tarried with him fifteen days; but other of the apostles I saw none, saving James, the brother of the Lord.* (Galat. i. 18, 19.) This was, on the part of Paul, a visit of deference to Peter, on whom Christ had built his Church, and whom he, of course, with all the other faithful, regarded as the chief bishop. He clearly gives us to understand, that the object of his visit was not to be instructed, because Peter's teacher had been his likewise; but to acknowledge in Peter the dignity and superiority to which he was entitled.

And they were loth to take him to their ranks,
Which still he would adorn, if but sincere.
At length through Barnabas he found access
To the apostles: they were told the tale
Of marvel which had happened on his way
To persecute the saints: how Christ appeared,
And, clad in lustre, spake to Saul; and how,
Changed on the spot, among the Damascenes,
He nobly suffered for the name of Christ.

Then was he numbered with the brotherhood;
Associate with them, at Jerusalem,
In coming in and going out; always
Preaching intrepidly the name of Christ.
And with the Gentile proselytes he spoke;
And with the Greeks disputed, who, enraged,
Conspired to kill him; but their scheme was foiled:
To Cæsarea by the brethren sent,
He fled away to Syria's capital. (1)

Upon his head the fury of the Jews
Seemed, like a storm-cloud, gathering; when, no more,
They saw him in Jerusalem, they seemed
Oblivious of the others: for a time,
Through all Judea was the Church with peace—
Through Galilee and Samaria—blest:
The fear of God walked with her, joyous in
The consolation of the Holy Ghost.

(1) Tarsus: *Then I came into the parts of Syria and Cilicia* (Galat. i. 21.)

Now on the earth the longed-for period dawned, (1)
Destined the glorious secret to reveal
Of the vocation—by the prophets sung—
Of Gentiles to the gospel; secret, still,
Involved in mystery, and hung with doubt,
To every Jewish mind: for, it was deemed
That though the nations might engrafted be
Upon the trunk of Faith, they first should pass
Through Judaism. But now the clouds disperse;
And in full day the Light of Truth ascends,
To shed His beams o'er all the exulting world.
Through Peter was this revelation made,
The Chief of the apostles; who claims not
The title without justice, nor the rank
Pre-eminent, unauthorized, assumes,
Which gave him power supreme to rule the Church
Through him the portals of Eternal Life
Were opened to the nations, as through him
Already to the Hebrews: his compeers
Shared not the labors of the harvest-field,
Till he had gathered in the earliest fruit.
His high authority was sealed in Heaven:
For wonders, which amazed, convinced the Jews,
Followed, like handmaids, and obeyed his will.

Peace still was reigning through the growing Church;
And Peter, vigilant o'er all his flock,
Passed through the country, visiting the saints (2)

(1) Chap. x.
(2) The first Christians were generally called "saints;" as we

In every place, until, at length, he came
To Lydda: (1) there he found a certain man,
Æneas named, who eight long years had lain
Bed-ridden with the palsy, which defied
The skill of science, and no art could heal.
His state notorious all the city knew.
And if, through Peter, Heaven should raise him up,
Then would they yield submissive to his power.
The apostle enters: with benignant eye,
He looks, in majesty and pity, on
The wasted sufferer, and then calmly said:
"Æneas, Jesus healeth thee; arise,
And make thy bed." He instantly arose!
Full in the public gaze this deed was done;
Lydda and Saron witnessed it; and all
That dwelt there were converted to the Lord. (2)

To this great miracle, a greater far
Succeeded. By the ministry of man,
None greater can Omnipotence achieve,
Than from the regions of the dead call back,
Into this breathing world, the spirit flown.

Not far from Lydda, in the quiet town

find in many parts of the Epistles of St. Paul. *Christian* and *saint* were once synonymous terms: are they now?

(1) A city of Palestine, a short distance from the Mediterranean Sea. It is afterwards called *Diospolis*. A council was held there, which condemned the errors of Pelagius, who saved his person from condemnation by a dissimulation which is not seldom practised by men in similar circumstances.

(2) Saron was the name, not of a city, but of a fertile country, according to St. Jerome, densely populated.

Of Joppe, dwelt a matron meek and fair,
Who, 'mongst the brethren, like a precious flower,
Bloomed in the beauty of her faith serene,
And o'er the garden of the Church diffused
The sweetest fragrance of good works—of alms,
Of prayer, of innocence, of charity.
Her name Tabitha was—styled by the Greeks (1)
Dorcas: it chanced, by Heaven's all-wise design,
That then she sickened; and, amid the grief
Disconsolate of Joppe, she expired.
Her corpse—the due ablutions being done—
Lay in an upper chamber, on a couch.

To Lydda were incontinently sent
(For rumor told them Peter still was there)
Two men, conjuring him, without delay,
To haste to Joppe. By the Spirit led,
Peter departed with them. At the gates
Hundreds, with anxious interest, had thronged
To meet the apostle, whom, with solemn joy,
They eagerly conducted to the place
Where Dorcas slept in the cold arms of death.
With doleful exclamations he was met,
Upon the threshold of that upper room:
Widows were mourning there in deep distress—
For they had lost a more than mother—one
Who clothed them, and their desolation cheered. (2)

(1) The Greek word *Dorcas* signifies a roe. The Syriac word *Tabitha* means the same. It is not said whether this woman was married or not. Charity sanctifies every state of life.

(2) *They made the good works of Tabitha speak*, says Saint

Showing their robes and garments,—"These," they sighed,
Lamenting, "these, Tabitha! are thy gifts!"
The heart of Peter, mid this scene of wo,
With sorrow bled. Bidding the crowd retire,
Close by the couch he knelt, in silent prayer:
Then, looking on the body fixedly—
Which with his tears was watered—he exclaimed:
"Tabitha, rise!"—and lo! her eyelids move—
She stirs, as from a slumber—looks around,
Sees Peter leaning o'er her—and sits up.
He stretched his hand, and raised her from her couch:
Then calling in the widows and the saints,
To them presented her, alive and well. (1)

Cyprian, *the most eloquent of all prayers. Peter was touched with compassion. How much more was Jesus Christ, who, in the persons of these widows, was the object of her charity.* De oper. et Eleem. Cap. 2.

(1) Beyond all doubt Tabitha was saved; since she had taken with her to the other world the treasure of her good deeds and alms. If so, it may be asked, if St. Peter, in restoring her to life, did not do her wrong? Putting aside Peter, who was a mere instrument, let us look to God, the author of the miracle. *All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth,* says the prophet. This should suffice as a general answer to such questions. Nevertheless, it is permitted those who respectfully examine the ways of the Lord, in the absence of certainty, to hold to probability. Thus do theologians act. And they have said, that it is by no means probable that God would expose anew, at the risk of their salvation, those who had once died in his grace: that if we cannot absolutely affirm, that after their resurrection they were impeccable, the Lord secures their salvation by means the infallible effect of which is well known; and, losing nothing in this respect, they increase their merits by a lengthened life. It is not thus with those who have departed in a state of sin. Restored to life, they

Throughout all Joppe soon these tidings rang,
And added numbers to the Christian fold.
There, many days, not in the mansions proud
Of opulence and grandeur he abode,
But with an humble artisan, sincere
In the new faith—a tanner, Simon named.
From that obscure retreat—'tis now the hour—
Must he go forth, to spread the gospel-beams
Among the Gentiles, who in darkness sat,
And in the shades of death. Already now
Preparatory symptoms—like the dawn,
Dim harbinger of day-light—had begun
Within a neighboring city to appear.
'Twas Cæsarea: there, a valiant man,
By name Cornelius, o'er the Italian band
Holding the station of Centurion,
Dwelt with his family—who, like himself,
Were given to religion, fearing God,
Performing alms-deeds, and devout in prayer. (1)

may obtain grace, and persevere in it. Theologians add, that their sentence had not been pronounced; or, at least, the execution of it had been suspended: because it is decreed, *from hell there is no redemption*:—a truth which, according to them, can suffer no exception.

(1) Cornelius was just, even before his conversion to Christianity; since St. Paul says of him: God does not except persons, *but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh justice, is acceptable to him.* (Acts, x. 35.) The Pelagians concluded that man could become just merely by the force of his free will. Catholic doctors have refuted them, by establishing the necessity of a supernatural prevenient grace, co-operating with justifying and meritorious works. But, it may be said, if Cornelius was just, what need had he of the preaching of St. Peter? I answer: 1. Pursuing his ordinary conduct, recompensed in him the good use

Such was the man, so faithful to the law
By nature graven on the human heart;
So just, amid the vices of the world,
As Noah, and the Patriarchs, of yore.
Such was Cornelius, destined to become
The first-born of the Gentiles in the faith.

Absorbed in prayer, towards the ninth hour of day,
He had a vision; clearly as the light,
He saw an angel of the Lord approach, (1)
And heard his voice distinct:—"Cornelius!"
With terror seized, and shuddering, he replied:
"What is it, Lord?" The angel, then, to him:
"Thy prayers and alms-deeds have gone up to heaven,

ne made of grace by a more excellent grace; which added perfection to justice, and to the sanctity of the natural law the more sublime sanctity of the Christian law. 2. This second grace became necessary for him, even for salvation; because, since the publication of the gospel, which commenced on Pentecost day, it was necessary to salvation to have an explicit faith in Jesus Christ: for, in truth, it was not known then that the Gentiles were called; and this justified Cornelius for not yet having embraced it. But this great mystery was on the point of being fully revealed, as it was, by a glorious distinction, in his person.

Though not, as yet, a Christian in faith, he was in good works, to which God did not delay in adding faith. How many Christians by faith are pagans in deeds—who are, too often, punished by the loss of faith!

(1) St. Thomas has said, that if a Gentile had faithfully kept the natural law, God would send an angel to instruct him, rather than leave him without the knowledge necessary for salvation The example of Cornelius is a proof of this; and it is confirmed by the axiom of St. Augustine: *God does not refuse grace to any one who does what lies in his power.*

A blest memorial in the sight of God.
Send down to Joppe men, without delay,
And hither call one Simon, surnamed Peter;
He lodgeth in another Simon's house—
A tanner—near the sea-side: him consult
With diligence: to thee, what is required,
He will make known, and tell thee what to do."

The angel vanished. With obedience prompt,
Cornelius hastened to fulfil the task:
To three good men the vision he disclosed—
Two servants and a soldier, fearing God,
All to his orders subject; whom, as bid,
In quest of Peter he dispatched to Joppe.

Now on the hills the mid-day sun was bright,
And Joppe basked in lustre, as her towers
Welcomed the couriers near. Peter, meanwhile,
Had to the summit of the house retired, (1)
To yield his mind to prayer. But hunger pressed
Upon his wearied frame, and he would eat:
When lo! ere food was brought, he swooned away
Into an ecstasy of mind, and saw
The blue heaven opening on his raptured eye,
And from the firmament, at every point
Sustained, a sheet descending to the earth; (2)

(1) The roofs of the houses were flat, in Palestine. Peter retired there to pray, about noon. The Jews had consecrated to prayer the first, third, sixth, and ninth hours. Hence *prime*, *tierce*, *sext*, *nones*, in the Christian Church.

(2) This sheet represented the Church, which was to receive in her bosom the Gentiles, whom the Jews looked upon as impure

Wherein was every kind of animals
Four-footed, and of reptiles of the sod,
And fowls of air: and then this voice was heard:
"Peter, arise; these creatures kill, and eat."
He answering, said: "Far be it from me, Lord;
Ne'er have I tasted aught unclean, impure." (1)
The voice returned: "That which the Lord hath
cleansed,
Call not unclean;" and this repeated thrice:
And then the sheet was drawn up into heaven. (2)

Whilst on this vision musing Peter sat,
Scanning its meaning and its object, lo!
The men from Cæsarea sent arrive,
And stand before the gates of Simon's house,
Asking for Peter, who, in thought profound,

and abominable. The Church comes from heaven, and must return thither—as the sheet that stretched down upon the earth, but was suspended at each corner in the skies. Some interpreters think that all the animals which it contained were impure. Others are of a different opinion. What appears certain, from the answer of St. Peter, is, either that they were all unclean, or that he understood the voice to command him to eat of the clean and unclean alike.

(1) God made use of this figure, because, besides the vocation of the Gentiles, which was its principal object, it insinuated the abolition of the distinction between clean and unclean meats, recommended by the old law. The Rabbins themselves have admitted that this distinction would cease after the coming of the Messiah.

(2) The repetition was made, the better to assure St. Peter of the reality of the vision. It figured, likewise, the invocation of the three persons of the Trinity, by which the Gentiles were to enter into the Church.

Was still absorbed. To whom the Spirit said:
"Behold, three men are seeking thee; arise,
Descend, and with them, nothing doubting, go;
For on their errand are they sent by me."

Peter went down; and meeting them, "All hail.
Exclaimed. "Ye ask if Simon lodgeth here,
Peter surnamed; I am the one ye seek:
The object that hath brought you hither tell."
"Cornelius, a Centurion," they replied;
"An upright man, and one that feareth God,
Esteemed by all the nation of the Jews,
Received an answer of an holy angel,
To send us for thee, into his own house,
That he may hear the words which thou wilt speak."
He bade them enter. And as now the night
Her sombre wings was spreading o'er the sea,
They lodged beneath this hospitable roof.

Then, as the morrow on the waters blushed,
With them he started, followed by a train—
From Joppe—of believers; and, next day,
Triumphant entered Cæsarea's gates.
Cornelius, with his kinsmen and his friends,
Awaiting their arrival anxiously,
Went out to meet them: and it came to pass
As Peter entered, that Cornelius fell
Respectful at his feet, and would adore.
But Peter lifting him, "Arise!" exclaimed,
"For nothing more than mortal man am I." (1)

(1) Not that Cornelius took him for a god Cornelius was too

Then, talking, they came in, and joined the throng
Assembled there; whom Peter thus addressed:
"You know it is unlawful for a Jew
With other nations intercourse to hold.
But God hath lately made me understand
That no man should be deemed unclean. Wherefore
Debating not, I came as soon as called.
And now I ask the cause for which you sent."

"Four days ago," Cornelius replied,
"At the ninth hour, while praying in my house,
A young man, vested in resplendent white, (1)
Stood suddenly before me, and thus spake:
'Thy prayer, Cornelius, is heard; thy alms
Have gone up, a memorial in the sight
Of favoring Heaven: to Joppe, therefore, send
For Simon, surnamed Peter. In the house—
Hard by the sea-side—of another Simon—

enlightened to be capable of such an error; as he regarded, merely as a messenger from God, the angel who had appeared to him shining with glory. But he looked upon Peter as an extraordinary man, whom he should approach with the marks of profound veneration: this homage, due to his dignity, St. Peter refused from humility. The Centurion had already sanctified his household; and now he desires to sanctify his friends and relations. A soldier becomes an apostle. Sanctity produces zeal in every condition of life.

(1) *A man;* that is to say, the angel appeared under a human figure: for it was not an intellectual vision, but a sensible and corporeal apparition. And here it is worthy of remark, that when it is said that his prayers were heard, his alms are also added: to teach us that it was principally on account of his alms that his prayers were efficacious. Whoever unites these two means, has discovered the infallible secret of moving the heart of God.



Ramleh, with the Hills of Judea.

By trade a tanner—he may now be found.'
I sent obedient: and well hast thou done
By yielding to my wishes; for all here
Are gathered, to be taught the things which God
Commands that we should know." Peter replied
"In very deed am I now more convinced,
That God respects not persons; but, alike
In every nation, whoso feareth Him,
And worketh justice, is acceptable.
The wall of separation is thrown down:
The word to Israel's children God hath sent,
Preaching the reign of peace, through JESUS CHRIST,
Who is the Lord of all. What hath occurred
Throughout Judea, ye cannot but know,
In Galilee beginning: how the Lord,
After the baptism on the Jordan preached
By John, the unction of the Holy Ghost
And power conferred on Christ of Nazareth,
Who, as he went about, did good to all;
And from the Devil rescuing those oppressed;—
For God was with him. (2) And of all he did,
Throughout Judea, in Jerusalem,
We are the witnesses: we saw Him die,

(1) *God was with him;* for he was united to him in the unity of person. This text was abused by Nestorius and others, for the purpose of making a distinction of persons in Jesus Christ: the person of God who was with Christ, and the person of Christ with whom God was. It is true, the personal union is not here expressed, but it is not contradicted. The Catholic dogma on this subject is founded on many texts. Whoever separates them, has but a part of truth; and if he deny the remainder, he is completely in error.

In grief and ignominy, on the tree;
But then we, likewise, saw Him risen again,
Victorious over death,—made manifest
Not to all men, but to the chosen few (1)
Whom God, as witnesses, had pre-ordained—
Even to us, who with Him ate and drank,
And converse held, when risen from the tomb.
He hath commanded us to preach His name,
And testify that God hath made him Judge
Of all the living, and of all the dead. (2)
Of Him the prophets testimony gave—
That all, believing in His holy name,
Shall full remission of their sins receive."

(1) Why not to all the people? asks the unbeliever. If Christ had appeared to all, infidels, like himself, would not have believed it the more. Lazarus was seen by all the nation; and the only effect produced was to inspire the enemies of truth with the design of putting him to death a second time. *If they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe one arisen from the dead.* (Luke xvi.)

(2) This same expression occurs in the creed. The sense is not clearly determined. By the *living and the dead*, some understand the *just* and *unjust*. Others explain the *dead* in its literal acceptation; and understand by the *living*, those who will be in the world when Christ shall come to judge mankind. These, too, must, however, undergo the general fate of all the children of Adam, and die, but will immediately rise.

A third explanation may be hazarded: it is so simple, that it possibly may be the true one. The *dead* are those who are deceased; the *living*, those who are still on earth. Christ will judge those that have preceded us to the tomb; and us, who are left behind. There appears some foundation for this explanation in the words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: *The dead who are in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive, &c.* (1 Thess. iii. 15, 16.) He is our Judge and Saviour: we must fear and love Him.

He had not finished, ere the Holy Ghost
Fell on all them that heard the words he spake. (1)
They of the circumcision, who had come (2)
From Joppe with him, marvelled to behold
The Holy Spirit on the Gentiles poured—
Who spake with tongues, and magnified the Lord.
Thus, in full light, Heaven's secrets were displayed,
And Jewish prejudice for ever quenched.

Peter resumed: "Can any man forbid,
That these who have received, as well as we,
The Holy Ghost, with water be baptized?"
Then, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
They were regenerated into life.
And for some days among these Gentile-saints,
In spiritual conversation, he remained.

Fame spread these joyous tidings o'er the land: (3)

(1) They had received sanctifying grace before baptism; as always is the case when the disposition carried to this sacrament is perfected by charity. They had received the effect of confirmation with the miraculous and sensible gifts which accompanied it in those early times. God, the author of the rule, is not subject to it: and it was not without reason that he dispensed with it on this occasion, since this was the last miracle that rendered complete the proof of the vocation of the Gentiles.

(2) There were, therefore, uncircumcised faithful, some interpreters conclude. But they are deceived. If there had been, would so many prodigies have been necessary to persuade Saint Peter that the uncircumcised could be admitted to baptism? The *circumcised faithful* are not here distinguished from the *uncircumcised faithful*, but from the *circumcised unbelievers:* that is, the Jews who had not embraced the faith of Jesus Christ.

(3) Chap. xi.

They reached Judea, where the Apostles learned,
With thankful hearts, as all the brethren, too,
That e'en the Gentiles had received the word.
Yet when, exulting, from his conquest high,
Peter returned up to Jerusalem,
Some of the circumcised contended with him:
"Why didst thou go to men uncircumcised,"
They doubtingly inquired, "and eat with them?"
To whom, relating all that had occurred,
In proper order, Peter thus replied:
"While in the town of Joppe, fixed in prayer,
An ecstasy came o'er me, and I saw
A vision: as it were a mighty sheet
From heaven, by four corners, hanging down,
And stretching near me: in it I beheld
Four-footed creatures of the earth, and beasts,
And creeping things, and fowls that live in air.
Meanwhile, a voice addressed me: 'Kill and eat.'
To which I answered: 'Not so, Lord, not so;
For I have never tasted aught unclean
Or common.' But the voice again from heaven:
'Call not that common which the Lord hath cleansed.'
And this distinctly did it utter thrice;
When all were taken up to heaven again.

"It chanced, at this same moment, that three men
Came hurrying to the house wherein I lodged,
From Cæsarea sent to me; with whom
The Spirit bade me, nothing doubting, go:
By these six brethren followed, I obeyed;
And to the dwelling of a man repaired,

Who told us that an angel he had seen,
Commanding him forthwith to Joppe send,
And there for Simon, surnamed Peter, call;
With this assurance: he will teach thee truths
Whereby thou shalt be saved and thy whole house.
No sooner had I spoken, than on them,
As formerly on us, the Spirit fell:
Then on my memory broke the promised word:
With water John, indeed, baptized; but you
Shall with the Holy Spirit be baptized. (1)
If, then, the same grace God on them conferred
As upon us, believers in the Lord—
Christ Jesus—who was I, to oppose His will?"

Thus reasoned Peter; from whose lips inspired, (2)
Conviction dropped into the hearts of all:
For they who questioned him were virtuous men,
Living and seeking for the truth alone:
Hence, after hearing him, they held their peace,
And glorified the Lord, who, unto life,
Repentance also to the Gentiles gave. (3)

To these first triumphs in the pagan world
Succeeded others, yet more glorious far:

(1) Christ's baptism was also of water; but it conferred, likewise, the Holy Ghost. John's did not.

(2) Peter's reasoning was unanswerable. It was evident that Cornelius and his household had received the *grace* of the sacrament; how, then, could the *sign* be refused?

(3) That is, salvation, designated by life everlasting, which is the *term*, and repentance, which is the *means*. Without the means, who can hope to arrive at the term?

The saints, who, by the persecution's rage
Which Stephen's death excited, were dispersed,
Had wandered, homeless, into distant lands—
To Cyprus, Antioch, Phœnicia:
But, prompted by their native prejudice,
Proclaimed the gospel to the Jews alone.
Yet in their number, happily, were some
Of Cyprus and Cyrene, who announced
The name of Jesus also to the Greeks. (4)
God's mighty hand was with them: crowds believed
Their word, and were converted to the Lord.

Since on Cornelius and his house, of late,
The Sun of Justice, in full splendor, rose,
The cloud of doubt, which o'er the Gentiles' doom
So long and dense had gathered, was dispelled.
The problem melted—for it had been solved.
The Church, residing at Jerusalem,
Received the gladsome tidings, and as far
As Antioch deputed Barnabas;
Who should approve the work, and, if need be,
The finishing and crowning stroke apply.

The good had been achieved; naught now remained
But to secure, and spread abroad, its fruits.

(4) Greek Gentiles; as appears from the contrast made in the text between Greeks and Jews. Had these new preachers heard of the conversion of Cornelius, or did they follow the movement of the Holy Ghost? We know not. It appears probable that the tidings of the conversion of that Centurion must have reached them.

With rapture Barnabas, arriving, saw
The operation of the grace of God—
Changing their hearts, illumining their minds.
In cheering language, he conjured them all
With noble fortitude to persevere.
With reverence they heard his voice; for he
A good man was, full of the Holy Ghost,
And full of faith: the Neophytes waxed strong,
And countless converts yielded to the faith.

The gospel-harvest whitening spread afar,
O'er fertile fields: new reapers were required.
But there was one, in Heaven's omniscient eye,
Destined to gather in, from all the earth,
The mystic grain: him (God had thus decreed)
At Tarsus dwelling lonely, Barnabas
Sought for and found, and brought to Antioch.
One year entire together they conversed,
And multitudes instructed in that Church.
Blest Antioch! where first was given the name—
The glorious name—of CHRISTIANS to the saints. (1)

Drawn by the rumor of these marvellous things—

(1) This name has continued ever since. The virtues it expresses are found yet in some that bear it; in most of them, the name only brings out in stronger relief the contrast between their virtues and their vices.

Julian the Apostate issued a decree, by which he suppressed the name, and styled them Galileans. He feared the name at which the devils tremble, as a holy Father observes. In this measure, however, it is plain he was wanting in common sense: the *things* themselves may, more or less, be dependant on the caprice of princes; *names* are not.

Perhaps to witness and take part in them—
There came, in those days, from Jerusalem,
Prophets to Antioch. One of whom, inspired,
Named Agabus, foretold that there would rage
A general famine over all the world,
Which under Claudius should come to pass.
Against this scourge, in season, to prepare,
The brethren—each according to his means—
Proposed to send relief to those that dwelt (1)
Throughout Judea. In the ancients' hands
These alms they placed, through Barnabas and Saul
Thus charity, the germ of every good,
Bound heart to heart in sympathy divine.

Now o'er the earth the apostles were dispersed, (2)
Bearing the gospel to its utmost bounds;
And yet, though severed far by space apart,
One symbol centred all their minds and souls:
This the great point to which—as to the pole
The needle turns—their common faith aspired:—
In essence ONE, though preached to various climes,
And through all ages to endure the SAME.

(1) Two reasons may be assigned why the brethren in Judea would stand most in need of relief. 1. They had been stripped of all their possessions: the Gentiles, on embracing Christianity, were not. 2. The Gentiles were not as yet persecuted by the idolaters as the Jews (converted) had been by their nation.

Since the famine was to be universal, avarice would have suggested that they should provide for themselves and not for strangers Charity, on the contrary, told them to risk their own comforts for the necessities of their brethren. Under which of these influences are we?

(2) Chap. xii.

Peter, meanwhile, Jerusalem forsook,
And fixed at Antioch his see supreme.
Where, though he made his permanent abode,
Still, as their wants required, through provinces
And towns he journeyed with his colleagues oft.
Yet everywhere the fury of the Jews
Pursued the Apostles, and the Apostles' Chief.

The bloody sword of Herod was unsheathed
Against the leaders of the Church: the first
To fall beneath his vengeance, and to die—
A Martyr in the cause of Christ—was James, (1)
John's brother. Finding that the Jews with joy—
With sanguinary joy—beheld his fate,
On Peter next the tyrant dared to seize. (2)

(1) This persecution was waged by Herod Agrippa—different from Herod who beheaded John the Baptist, and from the Agrippa before whom Paul pleaded. The first was his paternal uncle; the second his son. This prince had no authority in Jerusalem; nevertheless, he was permitted to exercise sovereign authority over the officers of his house—since he put to death the guards of Peter—and over the Galileans, his subjects; as were the two Apostles, one of whom he beheaded, and the other imprisoned. Pilate paid this deference to Herod when he sent Jesus to him, hearing that Jesus was a Galilean.

James was the son of Zebedee, and is called the *greater;* one of the three disciples whom Christ most cherished; the first that had the honor to shed his blood for his Master's name;—a much greater distinction than that which his ambition formerly desired and asked. His body, which was translated to Spain, is the object of pious pilgrimage from every part of the Catholic world.

(2) Pilate condemned Jesus because he feared the people. In order to please them, Herod beheaded James and imprisoned Peter, Both were murderers.

'Twas now the season of the azymes: crowds
Of stranger-Jews were in Jerusalem,
Rejoicing in the suffering and disgrace
Of him who, foremost in the ranks of Christ—
His Vicar, and His representative—
The truth with zeal unquenchable sustained.

Peter was apprehended: in the gloom
And solitude of prison chained, and watched
By four strong files of soldiers; with the intent,
After the paschal season should be o'er,
To sacrifice him to the people's rage.

The widowed Church mourned o'er her suffering Head;
And at her altars prayers—incessant prayers—
Were offered for him to the throne of God.
Weep not, weep not, afflicted Spouse of Christ!
Thy orisons have pleaded not in vain:
The arm of Herod, and the sword of fate,
May be uplifted, but can never strike.
That power, which opened once the prison-gates,
And let the apostle free, is not abridged;
Beneath it, as his ægis, Peter sleeps,
And will awake triumphant in its might.

Upon his irons Peter calmly lay,
Between two soldiers slumbering at the door.
The guarders kept their sentry vigilant,
Amid the darkness, through which glimmered dim
A solitary torch: when, by his side,

An angel of the Lord, arrayed in light,
Which threw its beams around the prison, stood.
He touched the apostle, raised him up, and said:
"Rise quickly;" and, from off his hands, the chains
Dropped of themselves. "Put on thy sandals now,
And gird thyself, and cast thy garments round.
And follow." Peter, by the angel led,
Quitted the cell: but little did he think
That his escape was real;—or a dream,
Or else a vision—he imagined all.

Now, having passed the first and second guard,
The iron gate, which to the city leads,
They reached; spontaneously it opened wide,
And they were in the streets, at liberty.
The blessed angel vanished into air.

Then Peter, turning to the vault of heaven—
Where infinite stars were burning, and the moon
Shone, in full glory, through the fleecy clouds—
His wondering eyes, and, on the streets around
And mansions gazing,—felt that he was free.
"Now do I know, in very deed," he mused,
"That God his holy angel hath sent down,
From Herod's wrath to rescue me, and thwart
The hopes and expectations of the Jews."

Profoundly pondering, to the house he came
(For an asylum must he somewhere seek)
Of Mary, mother of that John surnamed
Mark, where a number of the saints had met

To pass the night in prayer: when at the door
He eager knocked, a damsel, Rhodè named,
Listened attentively, and knew his voice.
Wildered with joy, she opened not, but ran
To tell them, Peter on the threshold stood.
"Peter!" they cried; "why, woman, thou ar. mad!"
But yet more she persisted—he is there.
"Impossible!—his angel it must be!" (1)

Still did he knock: they opened, and behold!
He stood before them; and they were amazed.
Screams, shrieks of terror, in confusion rose.
Meekly he beckoned to them not to fear,
And to be silent. He related, then,
How from the prison God had rescued him:
And charging them the tidings to convey
To James, and to the brethren, he withdrew. (2)

(1) This text has often been cited against the Calvinists, to prove that every individual has his guardian angel. Calvin, who felt the force of this passage, attempted to elude it by saying, that Peter had an angel guardian during the time of his imprisonment and not after. How did he learn this? Was another angel sent to reveal this to him? The very expression, *his angel*, shows the conviction of the primitive Christians that each one was provided with *his own* angel.

They were also of opinion that the angel sometimes assumed the appearance of the persons they attended: this is, even now, the idea of some theologians. This they found on the fact of some saints who appeared, at the same time, in different places, without being conscious of it themselves; and they conclude that it was their angel: or, if not, it was a body aërial and inanimate, to which God gave the features and voice of those who thus appeared. All this is involved in mystery, which will be removed only in another world.

(2) James the less, bishop of Jerusalem, called in Scripture, the

Gray dawns the matin-twilight in the east,
And night sinks back to chaos. In the cell
Lay the rough chains; but Peter—where was he?
No irons could secure him: he is gone.
Great consternation on the soldiers seized.
Herod enraged the tidings heard: again
The prison he commanded to be searched
In every part: yet Peter was not found.
The guards were questioned; but unable they
To satisfy the king's revengeful mind,
With one fell swoop he sentenced all to die.
Then from Judea—hurrying away—
He went to Cæsarea, where he dwelt.

Of his vast crimes the measure now was full;
And vengeance gathered o'er his fated head.
The Tyrians and Sidonians had incurred
His high displeasure; who, with one accord,
Ambassadors deputed to effect
Due reconcilement. Blastus was gained o'er—
The Monarch's chamberlain—whose charge it was
To afford subsistence to their native land.
Through his all-ruling influence Herod deigned
The Ambassadors to hear: in purple clad,
Seated sublime upon a gorgeous throne,
The Prætor's diadem glittering on his brows,

Brother of the Lord. The common opinion is, that he is the same as is elsewhere styled the son of Alpheus. Peter, probably, left them to conceal himself elsewhere. He soon after quitted Jerusalem, and went to Rome, leaving Evodius as his successor at Antioch. The translation of the see from Antioch to Rome, took place about ten years after the ascension of Christ.

And in his hands the sparkling sceptre grasped,
He suffered them to approach—to stoop—to kneel—
In his most pompous presence: then he spake;
And as he spake, loud acclamations rang
From the applauding people: "'Tis a god!"
They blasphemously cried—"and not a man,
Whose voice we hear!" With vain complacency
The tyrant's heart the adulation drank,
Idolatrous and mean. But in the midst
Of this luxurious pageant, he was dashed—
Struck by the angel—from his mighty throne:
Worms fed upon that body, which before,
In pampered majesty and glittering robes,
Appeared a deity. He groaned, and died. (1)

The blood he shed now fertilized the Church.
God's word increased and multiplied the more.
And Barnabas and Saul—their duty done—
With John associated, surnamed Mark,
Quitting Jerusalem to Antioch came.

Now, in the Church which was at Antioch, (2)
Prophets and doctors dwelt: of these, the chief
Were Barnabas, and Simon, Niger styled,
And Lucius of Cyrene, Manhahen,
The Tetrarch Herod's foster-brother, and
Last, but yet greatest, Saul. While fasting these

(1) Mortals! humble yourselves before the majesty of God: for no matter who you may be—princes, monarchs, heroes—you must die; and your bodies must become the food of worms!
(2) Chap. xiii.

And duly ministering to the Lord,
The Holy Spirit spake to them, and said:
"Saul separate to me, and Barnabas,
For the great work whereunto they are called." (1

Mid prayer and fasting, on these chosen men
They laid their hands, and let them go their way.
Led by the Holy Spirit, they depart
First to Seleucia, and thence they sailed
For Cyprus; Salamina having reached,

(1) *Prophets,* who spoke by inspiration, and foretold the future, like Agabus. *Doctors,* who explained the sacred Scriptures. This title has been retained, with its original office, in the Greek Church. The minister charged with the explication of the gospels, is called *the doctor of the gospel:* he who explains the epistles of St. Paul, *the doctor of the apostle,* &c. &c. &c.

They were performing the *liturgy;* as the original text expresses it; that is, literally, the *public action,* and, in its general acceptation, divine service. The Greeks employed it to signify the *sacrifice;* and many interpreters understand it here in this sense: Λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν, &c.

Ordination was conferred with prayer and fasting: a practice which commenced with the Church, and has been perpetuated to our times.

But was this an ordination, or a mere deprecatory imposition of hands? Doctors differ. It is more probable that it was an ordination. Nothing was wanting—prayer, fasting, sacrifice, and imposition of hands. But it may be said, that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, declares that he had received nothing from men. True, with regard to his knowledge of religion and vocation to the apostolate; and still he received baptism from Ananias; and he could not receive the presbyteral or episcopal order, except by the ordinary ministry. Just as a priest, who, if raised to the papacy, receives nothing, as *sovereign pontiff,* from the bishop who consecrates him. He is made bishop by him, but supreme pastor in consequence of the order which God has established in his Church.

In all the synagogues the word they taught,
Assisted in their ministry by John.
They traversed all the island, and arrived
At Paphos, where they met a certain Jew—
A famed magician and false prophet—called
Bar-Jesu; who with Sergius Paulus dwelt—
A wise Proconsul, and illustrious man. (1)
This Roman officer desired to hear
The word of God: for Barnabas and Saul
To learn the truth, ingenuous, he sent.
But Elymas withstood them, with the hope (2)
That he might turn, by sophistry, the mind
Of Sergius from the truth: but Saul—replete
With wisdom, and with inspiration glowing—
Rived the magician with his lightning-gaze
And language charged with thunder: "Full of guile
Child of the Devil, enemy of truth,
Hater of justice! seeking to pervert
The righteous ways of God. And now, behold,
The Lord's dread hand is on thee: for a time
Thou shalt not see the beauteous light of heaven—
Thou shalt be blind!" And suddenly a veil

(1) This was moral wisdom, which did not merit faith, but removed all obstacles to its reception. It is the grace of God that renders man faithful: it is by his own folly that man ceases to be so.

(2) "Elymas, the magician," (for so it is interpreted,) are the words of the text. Commentators are embarrassed by them; for neither in Greek nor Hebrew does Elymas signify a magician and yet St. Luke affirms it does. It must have been a word of a language which has not come down to us; perhaps the ancient language of Cyprus, before the Greek was introduced into that island.

Of mist and darkness o'er his vision spread:
Amid the gloom he staggered, and besought
Some pitying hand to guide him on his way.
Heaven's mighty finger in this deed appeared:
The words of Saul were stamped with its assent.
Sergius admired the doctrine he proclaimed,
And stooped submissive to the yoke of faith. (1)

From Paphos Paul, with his companions, sailed
To Perge, in Pamphylia: but John,
Shrinking, discouraged, from so vast a charge—
A mission fraught with peril and with pain—
Withdrew from them, and to Jerusalem,
His native place, returned. They, having passed
Through Perge, reckless of fatigue, arrived
At Antioch of Pisidia; where, on
The sabbath-day, the synagogue they sought,
And sat them down among the assembled Jews.
The law and prophets being duly read,
The Rulers ('twas the usage thus to act
Towards strangers) sending to them, "Brethren,"
said,

(1) After the conversion of the Proconsul, Saul is always styled Paul. Perhaps he adopted it as less objectionable to the Gentiles, with whom he had to treat; or, perhaps, he assumed the name of the Proconsul; or, finally, perhaps, from their resemblance, the Gentiles confounded the two names. The apostle, it is certain, adopted the name, and calls himself by no other.

Sergius admired and embraced the true doctrine. The evangelical doctrine, simply expounded, appears, at first sight, sublime in its mysteries, and perfect in its morals. If there was any doubt of the divinity of its origin, the miracle wrought in his presence put this at rest.

"If to the people ye have any word
To make of exhortation, ye can speak."

Then Paul arose; and, with uplifted palm,
Beckoning for silence, solemnly began:
"Israelites, and ye who fear the Lord, (1)
Give ear: the God of Israel's people chose
Our fathers, and their race exalted high, (2)
Whilst they sojourned in Egypt; from whose land
He led them forth by His almighty arm.
During the space of forty years he bore,
Amid the desert, with their evil ways.
In Chanaan seven nations he destroyed,
And then by lot divided their rich land.
Four hundred years and fifty being past, (3)
He gave unto them Judges, till the days
Of Samuel the Prophet: after which
A king they longed for; and, as king, he gave
The son of Cis, named Saul, descended from
The tribe of Benjamin, who swayed the land (4)
For forty years. And when he was removed,

(1) Besides those who were Jews or Israelites by birth, others were admitted into the synagogues—such as proselytes and Gentiles, who adored the true God; and these are designated by the words: *and ye who fear God.*

(2) He exalted the people, and rendered them renowned by the seven plagues with which he visited their cruel oppressors.

(3) The number of years from the birth of Isaac to the division of the land of Chanaan, was about four hundred and fifty. This is the epoch which, interpreters generally agree, St. Paul had in view.

(4) These forty years include the time from the judgeship of Samuel to the reign of Saul.



Septimus Disembarks



Death of Goliath.

God raised up David to the regal throne,
Of whom this testimony was pronounced:
David, the son of Jesse, I have found
A virtuous man, according to my heart,
Who faithfully my wishes will perform.
Of this man's seed, as promised, there hath sprung
To Israel a Saviour—who is JESUS.
Ere He appeared, John preached to Israel
The baptism of repentance, and declared,
When finishing his course: 'I am not He
Whom ye mistake me for: lo! there will come
One after me, the sandals of whose feet
I am not worthy even to untie.' (1)

"Descendants of the stock of Abraham,
Brethren, and all among you who fear God,
To you the word of life is now addressed:
For by the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
And by their Rulers, he was not received:
They knew him not, nor yet the Prophet's words
Regarded, which, on every sabbath-day,
Are read; and which—condemning him to death—

(1) Many years after the death of John the Baptist, and far from Judea, St. Paul cites his testimony, as proving the divinity of Jesus Christ. This shows how great was the renown of the holy precursor, and the esteem in which he was held by the Jews in all parts of the world. St. John the Evangelist also cites him in his gospel, which he wrote more than fifty years after the death of the Precursor; which shows how profoundly his memory was venerated. All this added, no doubt, great weight to his testimony. But he proved it, likewise, from the prophecies; for it was predicted that the Messiah should be preceded by a prophet, who should prepare his ways.

Unconscious they and ignorant fulfilled ;
And though no cause of death in him they found,
They called on Pilate for his blood. He died :
And all things which were written being done,
They took his mangled body from the tree,
And laid it in the tomb. But from the dead
God, on the third day, raised him up again ;
And during many days, by those who came
Together with him to Jerusalem
From Galilee, was he distinctly seen,
Who to the people are his witnesses
E'en to this present hour. The promise made
To our forefathers we declare to you
Hath now among our children been fulfilled.
For God hath raised up Jesus in their midst,
As it is written in the second Psalm :
Thou art my Son—I have begotten thee. (1)

(1) St. Paul (Heb. i. 5) explains this passage of the eternal generation of the Word. It is, in fact, the natural and literal sense. Here he applies it to the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and it is explained in several ways. 1. As the manifestation of the eternal generation ; because, in raising up his Son, God seems to have said to the whole universe : This is my Son, whom I have begotten from all eternity ; acknowledge him, by virtue of this prodigy. 2. Others understand it of the resurrection itself, which is often called regeneration in the Scriptures ; making the words, *this day have I begotten thee*, signify, this day have I *regenerated thee*, having given thee a new birth. 3. In preserving the principal meaning of the passage, which is that of the eternal generation, many have explained it as referring to the incarnation and resurrection—thus : by the personal union of the Word with the human nature, a man has been made the Son of God. In this sense, God can say to man : *Thou art my Son*, &c. This man did not any longer exist after the death of Jesus, (although the

And that he raised him, never more to die,
He hath borne witness in these well-known words:
The promise made to David I will keep.
And, therefore, in another place, 'tis sung:
Thou shalt not give thy holy One to see
Corruption. Of these splendid promises
The object was not David, but his Lord,
Messiah, Son of God. For, having served,
During his generation, God's high will,
The Patriarch slept, and, with his fathers laid,
Beheld corruption. But whom God hath raised
Corruption He saw not. Then, be it known,
Brethren, to all, that through His holy name
Is preached to you remission of your sins;
And in all things in which, by Moses' law,
Ye were not justified, if ye believe,
Justification may ye now obtain.
Therefore, beware, lest on your guilty heads
The menace, spoken in the Prophets, fall:
Behold, despisers! wonder, and be struck
With awe; for, in your days, a work I work,
Which, when you hear it, no one will believe." (1)

Word continued united with him,) and there was no more a man who could be called the natural son of God. But this man being re-made, if this term may be allowed, by the re-union of the parts, a man again existed to whom God might say on the day of his resurrection, as well as of his incarnation: *Thou art my son*, &c. St. Paul seems to have united the two significations in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, where, after representing him as of the seed of David, he declares that he was preordained *to be the son of God*, &c. (Rom. i. 3–4.)

(1) The work he speaks of is mentioned in Habacuc, i. 5: it is the irruption of the Chaldeans into the land of promise, and the

Not ineffectual from the mouth of Paul
Issued this speech divine: for they who heard
Conjured them, as they left the synagogue,
To speak again on the next sabbath-day.
And many of the Jews, and numbers, too,
Of strangers who served God, attached themselves
To Paul and Barnabas, whose studious care
Was to preserve them in the grace of God.

Again the sabbath-morning smiled serene;
And almost all the marvelling city came (1)
Eager to hearken to the word of God.
With jealous hearts the incredulous Jews beheld
The concourse gathering round them. They blasphemed
The truths announced, and contradicted Paul.
But he and Barnabas unruffled stood,
And boldly chided them: "'Twas meet that first
To you the word of God should be addressed:
But ye reject it, and adjudge yourselves

ravages there committed by those inexorable ministers of Divine vengeance. St. Paul, who had to menace his auditors with much more terrible calamities, brings before their minds the first, which were but the figures of the second.

(1) The order established by God was, that the gospel should be first announced to the Jews. St. Paul follows it; although he says, in another place, that he was made the apostle of the nations—as St. Peter was of the circumcision.

They who have labored to rank St. Peter below St. Paul, on account of their different destinations, have not reflected that Jesus Christ was called to the ministry of the circumcision; and that he himself has declared, that his mission was limited to the wandering sheep of Israel.

Unworthy life eternal. Therefore, now
Will we turn from you to the Gentiles; since
The Lord hath thus commanded: *Thou shalt be*
Set as a light unto the nations far,
That to the utmost boundaries of the earth
Salvation thou mayest bring." The Gentiles heard
The tidings, and were glad; and to God's word
Due glory rendered: all who were ordained (1)
To everlasting life embraced the faith:
The gospel then throughout that country spread.

These triumphs filled the Hebrews with dismay.
Worsted in argument, to conquer still
They struggled, by cabal and artifice.
To the weak fears of women they appealed—
Of high condition, and religious lives,
But dupes sincere to hypocritic arts.
Their ancient prejudices they stirred up;
And through their influence the leading men
And Rulers of the city were impelled
'Gainst Paul and Barnabas to form a league,
And drive them violently from their coasts.

(1) The Greek word signifies simply *destined*, (Τεταγμένοι.) Interpreters generally do not understand by it *predestination*, strictly taken: they are slow to believe that St. Luke had been inspired to inform these men that they were *predestined;* especially, as it was probable that others, who did not immediately embrace the faith, might have done so afterwards, as it is said that the gospel *spread throughout that whole country.* They were the pre-ordained (*pre-ordinati*) to the dispositions requisite for the faith, which consists principally in the sincere love of truth, joined to the desire to embrace it.

From off their feet the Apostles shook the dust,
And for Iconium bent their way. Meanwhile,
With grace and joy were the disciples filled. (1)

(1) They acted in conformity with the injunction of Christ, (Matt. x. 14.) Thus, by a headstrong disposition in matters of religion, these women, otherwise regular and devout, were the cause of the light of truth being removed from their city, and extinguished for ever.

BOOK THIRD.(1)

CONTENTS:

Jews and Gentiles converted at Iconium—The lame man cured at Lystra—The two Apostles taken for Gods—The next day Paul is stoned—He returns to Antioch with Barnabas—Dispute on Circumcision—Paul and Barnabas go to consult the Apostles—Council of Jerusalem—Separation of Paul and Barnabas—Timothy circumcised—The Holy Ghost forbids Paul to preach in Asia and Bythinia—He is called to Macedonia—The possessed woman delivered—Paul and Silas scourged, imprisoned, and sent away—Preaching at Thessalonica—Insurrection caused by the Jews—St. Paul at Athens—His discourse in the Areopagus—Conversion of Dionysius—Paul preaches at Corinth and Ephesus-Apollo—Baptism of John insufficient—Miracles wrought by the garments of Paul—Jewish Exorcists maltreated by the Devil—Books burned—Sedition excited by the copper-smith, Demetrius—Paul at Troas—The young man who fell from the window, restored to life by him—At Miletus, his discourse to the Pastors of the Church.

AGAIN, naught daunted, in the synagogue (2)
The two apostles, at Iconium,
Made their appearance; and with so much force
And efficacy spoke, that numbers joined—
Both Jews and Greeks—their standard: but, meanwhile,
The unbelieving Hebrews sought to rouse (3)

(1) From the fourteenth to the twentieth chapter, inclusively.

(2) Chap. xiv.

(3) The Jews, who were the first persecutors of Christianity, were also the instigators and authors of the first persecutions it experienced on the part of the Gentiles. Already guilty of the blood of the prophets, from Abel to Jesus Christ, they found out the secret of making themselves guilty of the blood of all the martyrs, from Christ down to the end of the persecutions.

How could they excite the Gentiles against this religion, if not

The Gentiles' minds, and their revenge incense,
Against the brethren. Yet, despite their hate,
For no short period did they tarry there,
Confiding in the power of the Lord—
Who rendered testimony, by the signs
And wonders they effected, to His word.
The city was divided: with the Jews
A part, and part with the Apostles held.
The Gentiles with the Jewish rulers joined,
To use them contumeliously, and stone.
But they to Lystra and to Derbe fled—
Cities of Lycaonia—and passed
Through the surrounding country, preaching Christ.

There was a man at Lystra—known to all—
Whose feet were impotent, and who ne'er had walked;
A cripple even from his mother's womb.
While Paul was preaching, he attentive heard
Amid the multitude. The apostle saw,
And felt compassionate; for he had faith (1)
Sufficient to be healed. With a loud voice,
Paul spake to him: "Stand upright on thy feet!"
He started from the ground, leaped up, and walked.

The astonished multitudes, when they beheld

by assuring them that it tended to the destruction of their temples and idols? Thus men, the most opposed to idolatry, become its supporters. Are there not persons professing to be Christians, who would rather see Mahommedanism prevail than Catholicism?

(1) St. Paul read the attention of this man in his eyes, and, by prophetic light, saw that he had faith, and a firm confidence, likewise, in the power of the Apostle to cure him.

This wonder wrought by Paul, their voices raised,
Crying in their own Lycaonian tongue:
"The Gods are with us in the shape of men!"
Jove they styled Barnabas: but Mercury, Paul,
Because he spoke with eloquence divine.
The Priest of Jupiter—whose statue stood
Near to the city—came before the gate,
Bringing young heifers with green garlands crowned,
To sacrifice to them, as to the Gods.

Which, when the apostles heard, their robes they rent,
And sallying out among the crowd, exclaimed: (1)
"What, men of Lystra! are ye doing? We,
Like to yourselves, are mortals. These vain things (2)
Must ye forsake, and serve the living God;
By whose almighty power the heavens, the earth,
The deep, and all that they contain, were made.
Who, in past ages, let the nations walk (3)

(1) Simply to refuse divine honors might have been the effect of merely ordinary virtue in the ministers of the gospel. But the heroism of the apostles is here evinced by their rending their garments, rushing out into the midst of the crowd, and their cry of indignation and grief at the conduct of the people.

If, instead of sacrificing to them, the people had exclaimed: *These are Gods, and not men!* this flattery would have excited in their breasts an equal indignation It is no difficult matter to believe that we are neither Mercury nor Jupiter: is it easy to be convinced that the world is deceived when it says that we have spoken *divinely?* Preachers of the word of God! humility is your first virtue.

(2) Imaginary deities.

(3) God left them to the corruption of their hearts, and suffered them to adore deities as vicious as themselves. I say, *suffered*

In their own paths of darkness: of Himself
Still showing testimony; from the skies
Scattering His blessings; giving genial rains
And fruitful seasons, yielding copious food,
And with all gladness filling every heart."

As shift the winds, so change the people's minds:
But ne'er more fitful to caprice was turned
What seemed conviction solidly confirmed,
Than suddenly at Lystra. While the priest
In solemn pageantry, amidst a crowd
Applauding, stood to sacrifice prepared,
It chanced that from Iconium arrived
Some Hebrews, and from Antioch; who stirred up,
By heinous calumnies, their fellow Jews
To mutiny and vengeance. Paul they seized,
And stoned him in their fury; and, as dead, (1)

because he did not usher upon them the full day of the gospel. Nevertheless, they were not without light; and the works of creation were sufficient to make them know the Creator. This is signified in the words of St. Paul to the Romans (chap. i.): *They were inexcusable.*

(1) Was he really dead, and restored to life? At all events, he was miraculously cured of his wounds; otherwise it would have required much more time than one day to recover from them so as to be able to travel.

It was at this epoch, according to the most exact chronology, that St. Paul was caught up to the third heaven. Perhaps this might have occurred during the time he was reputed dead. There is, however, one difficulty; for he says, in his epistles, that whether he was *in his body or out of it*, he knew not. Now, his disciples, who surrounded him at the time he revived, might have cleared up this doubt by informing him whether or not his *body* had disappeared.

His body dragged without the city-walls.
But, as around him his disciples wept,
He rose unhurt, and to the city back
Intrepidly returned; whence, the next day,
With Barnabas, for Derbe he set out.

The tidings of the gospel having preached
Throughout that city, these heroic men,
Whom suffering and peril nerved the more,
To Lystra and Iconium returned,
And e'en to Antioch, there to animate
The faithful, and with fortitude inspire;
This fundamental maxim on their heart
Impressing deeply: *To heaven's blissful realms,*
Through many tribulations we must pass.
For all the Churches priests were then ordained
By Paul, who, fasting, with them offered prayer;
And to the Lord, in whom they had believed,
Commended them with fervor. Then they passed
Throughout Pisidia, and, unwearied, came
Into Pamphylia, where the word of God
At Perge they proclaimed, and then went down
Into Attalia: whence they sailed once more
For Antioch, from which they had been sent,
Intrusted to the auspicious grace of God,
To do the work so gloriously fulfilled.
There having safely landed, they convoked
The Church rejoicing, and the wondrous things
Recounted which the Lord, through them, had done: (1)

(1) That is to say, through their ministry. St. Paul has said

How he had opened to the Gentile race
The portals of the faith. And no short time
With the disciples calmly they abode.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, the Lord hath said, (1)
High as the heavens above the earth expand,
So are my thoughts exalted over yours. (2)
Behold the mystery which the human mind
Can understand not! Rather than submit
Their thoughts to Heaven's, mortals dare reject,
Rebelliously, the latter. From this source
Springs incredulity: or, bringing down
God's ways sublime to their low thoughts, they form
A union temerarious, which gives birth
To error and to heresy. The Jews,
To Christians changed, with passionate regard,
Cleaved to the memory of the ancient law:
Hence, with the gospel they began to blend
The forms of Judaism. Soon after, rose
Philosophers, who, on the tree of Truth,
Attempted to engraft Platonic shoots.
Among the former, several coming down
To Antioch from Judea, falsely taught:
"Brethren, unless according to the rite

in the same sense: *It is not I, but the grace of God with me* (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

(1) Chap. xv.

(2) Non enim cogitationes meæ cogitationes vestræ: neque viæ vestræ, viæ meæ, dicit Dominus. Quia sicut exaltantur cœli a terra, sic exaltatæ sunt viæ meæ a viis vestris, et cogitationes meæ a cogitationibus vestris. (Isa. lv. 8, 9.)

And law of Moses, ye be circumcised,
Eternal life ye never can attain."

Against this error Paul and Barnabas,
With strenuous zeal, contended. 'Twas resolved,
That they, and others of the other side,
Should go up to Jerusalem, and submit
The question to the Apostles and the Priests. (1)

They start from Antioch, accompanied,
Some distance, by the brethren, on their way.
Through Samaria and Phœnicia
They passed; relating how the Gentiles had
Received the faith;—which caused great joy to all.

They reached Jerusalem, where, with applause,
The Church saluted them. The Apostles, Priests,
And all came out to meet them: and they told
What mighty things through them the Lord had
wrought.
But some there were belonging to the sect
Of Pharisees, who had embraced the faith,
(They thus made known the question to be solved,)
Who held that circumcision, and the law
Of Moses, in the Church must be enforced.

(1) Another reason induced St. Paul to make this journey, as he informs us in his Epistle to the Galatians, (ii. 2.) *And I went up according to revelation (with Barnabas and Titus) and conferred with them in the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles: but apart with them who seemed to be something, lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain.*

This doctrine, is it true, or is it false?—
Decision must be given, and doubt expelled.

Wherefore, the Apostles and the Ancients met,
This matter, fraught with interest, to discuss.
Much disputation rose, and grave debate;
When Peter thus addressed them: (1) "Brethren, hear:
The Lord, you know, made choice, in former days,
Of me, among your number, to proclaim
His gospel to the Gentiles: and they heard. (2)
And God, who knows the secrets of their hearts,
Gave testimony, sending down on them,
As formerly on us, the Holy Ghost. (3)
No difference between them and us was made.
Their hearts renewed were purified by faith.
Why, therefore, tempt ye God; to lay a yoke (4)

(1) Here again we find Peter standing pre-eminent among the Apostles. After hearing all the arguments and debate which, for a considerable time, excited the council without producing any positive conclusion, he, holding the first place, (as his successors, the Pontiffs, still do in the Œcumenical Councils,) spoke in terms which *decided* the controversy. "*Tu es Petrus*," &c., strikes us forcibly here.

(2) Cornelius and his household, as we have seen above.

(3) The testimony, of which mention is here made, does not refer directly to the truths which Peter announced, but in the justification of the Gentiles. The Holy Ghost, by descending on them in a sensible manner, proved that they were actually holy, uncircumcised though they were. Therefore, neither circumcision nor Judaism was necessary for sanctity, or salvation, which is the fruit of it.

(4) To *tempt* God, is to exact or expect useless and superfluous miracles. Christ himself uses the term in this sense, (Matt. iv.)

On the disciples, which our Sires and we
Found insupportable? As we are saved,
So are they, likewise, by the grace of Christ,
Not by the observance of the ancient law."

Deep silence through the council now prevailed,—
When Peter ceased. Next Barnabas and Paul
Were listened to, with breathless interest,
While they narrated what prodigious signs
Among the Gentiles God, through them, had done.

When they had finished, James arose, and said:
"Men, brethren, hear my voice: Simon hath told
How from the Gentiles God a people drew,
Devoted to his name. With this accords
The language of the Prophets, who thus sing:
Then shall I come, and then build up again (1)
The tabernacle of David—from its ruins

Those to whom St. Peter here addresses the word, were in this case: for God having sufficiently declared his will by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit, to demand new proofs, was to demand a new miracle, which would be superfluous.

The *impossibility* to bear that yoke, signifies that it was *difficult* to bear it. God rendered testimony to many who submitted to it—such as Zachary and Elizabeth, of whom it is written, that they were both just: *observing all the commandments and all the ordinances of the Lord*, &c. (Luke, ii.)

St. Augustine proves, against Pelagius, that all the just, under both laws, are saved only through the grace of Christ. This dogma is certain, and of faith.

(1) By *the tabernacle of David*, is understood the incredulous portion of the Jewish people: by *the residue*, is meant those Jews who were converted, to whom the Gentiles will be added. God will form a new house of David—that is, a new people of God—

It shall arise . . . . the residue of men,
And all the nations upon whom my name
Shall be invoked, may seek and find the ***Lord.***"

Peter had given decision: Barnabas
And Paul sustained it by their strong support;
To which, drawn from prophetic oracles,
James adds another and convincing proof.
What now remains but clearly to conclude?
This charge on James devolved, who thus resumed:

"From all which reasons ye have heard, I judge,
That to the Gentiles, who the faith adopt, (1)
Be given no disquietude or fears:
But we should write unto them to refrain
From fornication, from polluted meats, (2)
From strangled animals, and from all blood." (3)

of which the Messiah, the Son of God, will be the eternal King. The prophecy is from Amos, ix. 11.

(1) The prophecy does not express the vocation of the Gentiles. The apostle concludes from it, that the Gentiles, converted, will not be subject to the yoke of the Mosaic law. We do not, at first sight, perceive the connection between the promises and the consequences. But, if we reflect a little, we will see it. All nations shall be called. Then circumcision will be abolished: for it was instituted to distinguish from all other nations the people which God had chosen as his own. Now, by the vocation of the Gentiles, the people of God must be formed from all the people of the earth: all distinction becomes superfluous, and, consequently, circumcision—the abolition of which included that of all Judaism.

(2) The Gentiles did not regard fornication as a crime. It was feared that this notion might be introduced into Christianity.

(3) Meats contaminated by their having been offered in sacrifice to the idols.

The Jews no caution on these heads required ;
For from the olden times, in every town,
Moses provided, in the synagogues,
Teachers to read him every sabbath-day.

The Apostles, Ancients, and the Church entire, (1)
Resolved from their own company to choose
Wise men and good, with Paul and Barnabas
To visit Antioch, and their letters bear:
Silas, and Judas, surnamed Barsabas,
Among the brethren venerable chiefs.
Through them the council spake, and thus decreed:
"The Apostles and the Ancients of the Church, (2)

(1) The *entire* Church might take part in the choice of deputies, but not in the *decision*. Others were associated with Paul and Barnabas, in order the better to satisfy the Christians at Antioch; for they would be considered disinterested witnesses.

(2) *Ancients*, or *priests*—οἱ Πρεσβύτεροι: the Greek word signifying both; and in the Vulgate both are used; which gives room to believe that they are the same. We know that, in the primitive times, the name of bishop and priest was given indifferently to bishops and priests. There is some appearance, that the great superiority of the apostolic order over all the inferior dignities, made them seem almost equal. After there were no more apostles, the bishops assumed their places as chiefs of the people, and priests properly called.

Some translate the "ancients *and* the brethren." The brethren, thus distinguished from the ancients, could have been only the simple faithful, who appeared to concur with the apostles and priests in a decree, which is at once dogmatic and legislative. We can easily imagine what would be the consequence if democracy were introduced into the ecclesiastical government. The translation of the Vulgate must, therefore, be retained. It is true, that in Greek the verse generally runs: the ancients *and* brethren; but we read, likewise, in very ancient Greek MSS., as in the Vulgate the ancients *among* the brethren: in Latin, *Seniores fratrum*.

To all their Gentile brethren of the faith
Who are at Antioch, in Syria,
And in Cilicia, greeting: having heard
That some, departing from us, have disturbed,
With useless words, your minds, subverting souls,
To whom we never such commandment gave,
It hath seemed good to us, assembled here,
To choose out men, whom, with our much-loved Paul
And Barnabas, we send unto you;—men
Who, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Their lives have perilled: we have, therefore, sent
Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell,
By word of mouth, the things that we now write.
For to the HOLY SPIRIT, and to US, (1)
It hath seemed good to lay upon your necks

It has long since been discovered, that the more ancient the Greek MSS. the more they are conformable with the Vulgate.

It is generally believed that the letter was written by St. James and it is remarkable that he is the only one among the apostles who, in his canonical epistle, as well as in this, uses the term, *greeting*, (*salutem.*)

(1) *And to us.* This signifies, that the apostles were not only the organs of the Holy Ghost, but they judged with him, and like him. In a word, that the Holy Ghost *presided* over the assembly, and the apostles were the members of it. Such is the rank to which God raises his ministers, and such the power he communicates to them.

All this is in virtue of the promises made to the Church, represented by this first council. The same Spirit will preside over all the Œcumenical Councils to the end of the world.

Of these four prohibitions, one continues to be, and must always be, enforced: viz. fornication. The law proscribing it is the divine law: and some theologians are of opinion, with St. Thomas, it is the natural law. The others are abolished. They were founded upon a wise condescension to the weakness of the Jews, many

No farther burden than the essential one.
These things are necessary: to abstain
From meats to idols sacrificed, from blood,
From fornication, and from strangled things.
Observing these, ye shall do well. Adieu."

The venerable deputies, dismissed,
Went down to Antioch; and, without delay,
Together gathering the multitude
Of brethren, placed the epistle in their hands.
Which being read, the Church with joy was filled,
Seeing the consolation it inspired.
Judas and Silas, in convincing terms,
For they were prophets, too, the saints addressed,
Strengthening their souls, and comforting their hearts.

Their task was done: and they to whom they brought

of whom would not consent to unite themselves with the Gentiles if they had been permitted to use meats which the law had taught them to consider as abominable. A stronger reason existed with regard to meats offered to idols. To eat of the victim as victim, (*quasi idolothytum*, 1 Cor. viii. 7,) was to participate in the sacrifice. It is true, that all might not have had this bad intention, but it was apprehended that first notions, which are seldom entirely effaced, might be re-awakened in many Gentiles; and that by eating these meats, they might still imagine that they were performing an act of religion. These laws ceased when the causes that established them no longer existed. The Latin Church observed them during several centuries; the Greek Church observes them to the present day.

It is by tradition we have learned that they were not intended to be perpetual. Should not those who reject tradition feel themselves obliged to observe them?

The peace of unity, dismissed them back
To those who sent them. But at Antioch
Silas remained; and to Jerusalem
Judas alone departed. There, too, Paul
With Barnabas continued: and they preached,

With others, zealously, the word of God.
But now a strong solicitude awoke—
For all the Churches—in the breast of Paul:
"Let us return," to Barnabas he said,
"And visit all our brethren in the towns
Wherein we have preached, and witness how they do."

And Barnabas agreed: but when with them
He would have added John, too, surnamed Mark,
Paul firmly urged he might not be received:
(For he had left them in Pamphylia,
Unequal to the work)—dissension rose (1)

(1) The saints always desire what God desires; but they are not always certain of his will. Then their attachment to their own impressions is not blamable, because they sincerely believe that they are acting according to that will.

The guardian angel of Persia resisted, during twenty-one years, the angel that spoke to Daniel, (Dan. x.) There was dissension among angels, but it did not create a division of hearts.

The Apostles, in this case, were persuaded that what they thought was according to God and reason, and, therefore, neither would yield. God, who had revealed so many things to them, left them in ignorance as to who was or was not deceived. He knew that this ignorance would occasion their separation, and this separation would tend to the still wider dissemination of the gospel. To judge by the result, both acted properly. The meekness of Barnabas would not exclude Mark from the ministry; and the severity of Paul produced in him such an increase of fervor, that he was,

Between the apostles; so that they resolved
One from the other to depart: with Mark
For Cyprus, Barnabas, indeed, set sail;
Paul, choosing Silas, to the grace of God
Delivered, by the brethren, went in peace.
Through Syria and Cilicia he passed,
Strengthening the churches, ordering them to obey
The precepts of the Apostles and the Priests.

The rites of Judaism had ceased to bind, (1)
But were not quite destroyed: they might be kept,
Or set aside, as each one should prefer.
A higher rule—and not their fantasies—
Guided the Apostles:—that of charity—
Whether the ordinances of the Law
They caused to be rejected or observed.
To all they labored to adapt their means
Legitimate, to Gentile and to Jew,
To gain all over to the faith of Christ.
To Derbe and to Lystra Paul departs.
There a disciple dwelt, named Timothy,
Of whom all Lystra and Iconium gave
Good testimony. Now, he was the son
Of a believing Jewish mother, and
A Gentile father: him Paul circumcised,
And took along; for to the Jews 'twas known,

afterwards, again associated with the Apostle of the Nations, and merited his praises. He arrived, at length, to so great a degree of sanctity, that many prodigies were wrought by him, as we find recorded in the Roman Martyrology, 27*th of September.*

(1) Chap. xvi.

That he was of a Gentile father born.
And as through all the neighboring towns they passed,
They taught the faithful the decrees to keep
Framed by the Ancients at Jerusalem.
Thus in their faith the Churches were confirmed.
And from the rigor of the ancient yoke
Redeemed, their numbers, every day, increased.

When they had traversed Phrygia, and all
The country of Galatia, they received
A warning from the Spirit, not to preach
The word of God in Asia. Passing, then,
Into the land of Mysia, with the intent
To go into Bethania, they were checked.
The Spirit of Jesus bade them enter not. (1)
Thus they went down to Troas; where, at night,
Paul had a vision. He beheld a man—
A Macedonian—who stood near, and said:
"Pass over into Macedonia,
And give us succor." We, forthwith, resolved

(1) What could have been the reason of this prohibition? St. Chrysostom answers, that it was merely for a time: God had deferred the conversion of these people to a more suitable period. Or, perhaps, it was only personal, referring to St. Paul; because God had reserved the apostleship of Bithynia for St. Peter, and that of Asia for St. John: although St. Paul preached there at another time. For what is here styled Asia, is only a particular province of it, of which Ephesus was the capital. *God wishes all men to be saved, and that they come to the knowledge of the truth.* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

The "Spirit of Jesus" is the Holy Spirit, which is no less the Spirit of the Son than of the Father. This text serves to prove that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Thither our course to turn, assured that God
Had destined us to preach the word to them. (1)
Sailing from Troas, in a course direct,
To Samothracia, we reached, next day,
Neapolis; and thence Philippi made,
Which, chief of Macedonian towns, salutes
The mariner arriving on this coast;—
A colony.—We, tarrying here some days,
Conferred together. On the sabbath-morn,
Without the gate upon the river side
Where there appeared a gathering to be
For prayer, we went; and, sitting down, we spake (2)
To the assembled women. One of these,
Whose name was Lydia, did attentive hear.
She purple stuffs from Thyatira sold, (3)
And worshipped God devoutly. As he spake,
Her heart was opened to the words of Paul;
And when she was baptized, and all her house,
"If you have judged me faithful to the Lord,
Come and abide beneath my roof," she said.

We chanced, as on our way to prayer, to meet
A certain girl—a youthful slave—possessed (4)

(1) We. St. Luke here begins to speak in the first person; from which we gather that it was at this juncture that he associated himself to St. Paul.

(2) *Prayer.* The Greek word signifies an oratory. The Jews had them near the cities, especially those where there were synagogues. "Ἐνομίζετο προσευχὴ εἶναι."

(3) It is written of Lydia, even before her conversion to Christianity, that she *served God.* It is natural to believe that she was a Jewess or a proselyte.

(4) This spirit was so called from Apollo, who had a famous

By a Pythonic spirit, who procured
Much profit by divining for her lords.
She followed Paul and us, crying aloud:
"These men are servants of the most high God, (1)
Who come to preach salvation." Many days
Was this repeated by the wretched girl.
Paul's heart was pierced with pity, and he grieved;
And to the spirit said: "Thee I command,
In the most sacred name of Jesus Christ,
To leave her." And that instant he went out. (2)

On candid hearts this wonder must have wrought
Beneficent effects—others it fired

temple at Delphos, where he issued his oracles through the priestesses of the temple. They were styled *Pythonissæ*, from *Pythius*, the epithet given to Apollo after his victory over the serpent *Pytho*.

(1) It would appear that this exclamation would have aided in the cause of the gospel; and still St. Paul silences the spirit. We cannot divine all the reasons which induced him to do this. There are two, which will be deemed more than sufficient: the first, the example of Jesus Christ, who imposed silence on the devils that proclaimed his divinity; the second, because St. Paul was not ignorant of the deep wiles of Satan, who never says the truth except to make it subservient to error, or the execution of perverse designs. We must except such cases where the Almighty makes him speak, in spite of himself.

(2) All general propositions are liable to exceptions. Some eminent writers have pretended that *all* the oracles, without exception, were the delusions of the priests of the temples, and that the devils took no part in them. But the present instance confutes that assertion; for, it is certain, that the Devil spoke through the organ of this girl. This fact supposes many others of a similar nature, and suffices to overthrow the system of the above-named critics. In the expressive language of M. de Fontenelle, the abbreviator of the Anabaptist physician, Van Dale: *C'est ici*

With furious revenge. Their gain destroyed,
Her masters seized on Silas and on Paul,
And to the Rulers in the market-place,
And Magistrates, presented them, and said:
"These men our city with disorder fill—
They being Jews, a fashion fain would preach,
Which we cannot receive, much less observe,
As Romans." The excited people ran,
Tumultuous, against them; and, their clothes
The Magistrates with violence rending off,
Condemned them to be scourged. With many stripes
They were chastised, and into prison cast. (1)
The jailer, charged to guard with diligence
The prisoners, thrust them in the deepest cell,—
Low in the inner dungeon,—and in stocks,
Still better to secure them, clasped their feet.

The midnight stillness Paul and Silas broke
By solemn prayer, and hymns of praise to God, (2)

un de ces cas où la moindre exception ruine la proposition générale.

(1) St. Luke makes mention but of this one flagellation of St. Paul. He suffered others. *Thrice*, he writes, *was I beaten with rods. Five times did I receive of the Jews forty stripes, save one.* (2 Cor. xi.) The law forbade the Jews to inflict more than forty stripes. For fear of going beyond this number, they gave but thirty-nine. The Jews made use of leather thongs; the Romans of rods; and, among the latter, no particular number was defined by the law.

(2) It was a common custom among the primitive Christians to rise at midnight to sing the praises of God. If the simple faithful did this, with much greater reason did the Apostles. They had learned this from their divine Master, who passed the nights in prayer. But this custom is traced back to the days of David,

And all the prisoners their voices heard.
When suddenly the earth began to quake,
And the foundations of the prison shook:
The doors flew open; and the bands were loosed
Wherewith the prisoners had been manacled.

The awe-struck jailer started from his sleep,
And finding open all the prison-doors,
Drew, desperate, his sword, and would have plunged
The blade into his heart; for all was done
With him, supposing that the prisoners had fled.

Amid the gloom Paul could not have descried,
By natural means, the action of the guard;
But Heaven revealed it; and he cried aloud:
"Harm not thyself, for all of us are here."

Then, by the glimmering lantern-light, the guard,
Searching his way, went in, and trembling fell,
In prostrate veneration, at the feet
Of Paul and Silas; and he led them out:
"Masters," imploring them, "what must I do,
That I, and all my household, may be saved?"

who declares that he arose at midnight to sing the praises of God (Ps. 98.) It is perpetuated to our times by religious persons of both sexes, who rise at midnight for the *matins*. Still, we must deplore the diminution of fervor in this particular. The Apostles, outraged, scourged, covered with wounds, imprisoned, chained, are as exact in their exercises of piety, as when free and tranquil. What a prodigy of fidelity! They chanted hymns and canticles under these frightful circumstances. What a prodigy of strength!

"Believe in the Lord Jesus," they returned.
And then to him, and to his house, they preached
The word of life: who, that same hour of night,
Washed their red wounds, and, with his family,
Believing in the Saviour, was baptized.
Then to his house he brought them, and spread out
The table, filled with joy, believing God.

Soon as the day was come, the Magistrates,
Repenting of their cruelty, despatched
A band of Lictors to the jailer's house,
Commanding him to set the prisoners free.
"Let these men go:" to Paul the keeper bore
The joyous tidings. "Go, depart in peace:"
These are the orders of the Magistrates.

But Paul made answer: "They have beaten us,
With public ignominy, uncondemned,
Though we are Roman citizens—and dared
Imprison us; and will they thrust us, now,
In secret out? not so;—but let them come (1)
And lead us forth themselves to liberty."

(1) It was not from resentment or pride that St. Paul exacted this satisfaction, but from zeal; and because he judged that this personal insult, unless effaced, would be identified with the gospel itself in those parts.

Under these circumstances, it was his duty to defend his honor following the counsel of the wise man: *Take care of a good name.* (Ecclesias. xli. 15.) However, it is so difficult that human passions should not be mingled in a similar defence, that a virtuous man, not having the lights of St. Paul, would not undertake it without the advice of some prudent director.

The *lictors* marched before the magistrates, carrying hatchets,

This fearless answer to the Magistrates
The Lictors carried; who, with terror, learned
That they were Roman citizens. In haste
They went, and soothing them with suppliant words,
Led them with honor through the prison-gates,
And urged them from the city to depart. (1)

Rescued from prison, in the peaceful home
Of Lydia, Paul and Silas found repose.
And having seen the brethren, and consoled, (2)
They left Philippi. With their blood that soil
Was sprinkled; which, in proper season, teemed
With blessed and abundant fruits of faith. (3)

Paul, therefore, to Philippi bids farewell, (4)
With Silas, (for none other followed on:) (5)

enveloped in bundles of rods, which they undid either to scourge or decapitate the victim

(1) In some Greek MSS. the magistrates are made to say: *Go from the city, lest some other excitement be raised against you, and a conspiracy against us.* But this looks more like a commentary than an original text: it shows, however, the reasons which influenced the magistrates to desire them to depart.

(2) The afflicted become consolers; and they who have received no injury stand in need of consolation! The unction of grace, in the first, and a dolorous compassion, in the second, produce these two effects. The first was a phenomenon which had been unprecedented—as admirable as any of the miracles which the Apostles performed.

(3) See the Epistle of St. Paul, addressed from his prison, in Rome, to the Philippians.

(4) Chap. xvii.

(5) Not even St. Luke, as we gather from the manner in which he speaks.

And having journeyed through Amphipolis
And Apollonia, at length they came
To Thessalonica, in which the Jews
A synagogue possessed: to this repaired,
As was his custom, Paul. Three sabbath-days
He reasoned from the Scriptures, and explained
The meaning of the prophecies: how CHRIST (1)
Was sent to suffer, and to rise again:—
"He whom I preach to you is JESUS CHRIST."
Among their number some the faith received,
Binding themselves to Silas and to Paul.
Of Gentiles, too, and those that feared the Lord, (2)
Great multitudes of men, and not a few
Of noble women, yielded to the truth.

The Jews with envy fired, and rancorous zeal,
Stirred up the populace. Through wicked men—
Men of the vulgar sort—a mob was formed,
Tumult excited, and in uproar thrown
The city. They, besetting Jason's house,
Sought after Paul and Silas—but in vain.
Not finding them, they violently seized
Jason and certain brethren, whom before
The Rulers of the town they headlong dragged,

(1) It is clear, from the Scriptures, that Christ was to suffer; and some Jews, who could not deny this truth, imagined two Christs, or two Messiahs: the one suffering, the other glorious and triumphant. The second is still expected.

(2) The Greek has it: *a great number of Greeks fearing God;* that is, Proselyte-Gentiles. The Vulgate separates them: the *people fearing God*, are the proselytes; and the Gentiles, those who were still idolaters, and were converted by St. Paul.

Exclaiming: "They who have this uproar caused,
Are strangers from afar, whom Jason lodged:
And they are rebels to the laws of Cæsar,
Saying their King is JESUS." By these means
The populace and Rulers were inflamed.
But satisfaction Jason having given, (1)
He, with the rest, was suffered to depart.

Meanwhile, beneath the cover of the night,
Paul, aided by the brethren, bent his way,
With Silas, for Berea. Where, as wont,
They entered in the synagogue. The Jews
Were more considerable here than those
Of Thessalonica. With eagerness
They heard the gospel; poring, daily, o'er
The Scriptures, searching if in them was found
The novel doctrine by the Apostles taught. (2)

(1) It was to the Magistrates, and not the Jews, or populace, to whom Jason gave satisfaction. Probably, he satisfied them by reasoning with them; and, perhaps, by assuring them that Paul and Silas would incontinently depart from Thessalonica. Other views are taken by some commentators: these seem the most probable and natural.

(2) A Jew, to whom the truth of the Christian religion is proposed, has a right to search the Scriptures, to discover whether the texts alleged are really in them, and whether they contain the meaning which is given to them. In this position stood the Jews of Berea. But it does not follow, as Protestants contend, (who too often abuse this example,) that Jews, converted to the faith, have the right to discuss each article of the creed, and form, from the Scriptures, their own particular explanation of each. It is easy to perceive the difference. The Jew, before his conversion, seeks the true religion, and has a right to investigate whether that proposed possesses the characteristics of truth. After his conver-

But when at Thessalonica 'twas noised
That the Bereans had received the word,
The Jews—their recent fury rankling yet
In their mad bosoms—to Berea came,
Kindling the passions of the multitude
Against the Apostles. Paul the city left,—
The brethren thus advising,—for the coast.
Silas and Timothy (the latter since
Had joined them) at Berea still remained.
To Athens Paul now shaped his arduous way,
With his companions. These, with a command
To Timothy and Silas in all speed
To join him in that city, he sent back.

Magnificent Paul stood amid the pride
Of Athens, breathing the fresh atmosphere
Of taste and beauty, which serenely spread
Around her monuments—her Parthenon,
Her proud Acropolis, her Hill of Mars, (1)

sion, he has found and embraced it; nothing more remains bu believe what it teaches, and practise what it prescribes. Ot wise he would contradict himself; because, after having judge it to be true, he would still doubt whether it might not be false.

Nevertheless, we are permitted to search the Scriptures for the proofs of the dogmas of the Church; in order to find the grounds on which they rest, to penetrate into their signification, to explain them to the people, and to combat with those who attack them. It is the *abuse*, therefore, and not the *use* of the sacred Scriptures, that the Church condemns: while all her children are exhorted to read with humility, and meditate with faith, the life of their divine Redeemer—his heavenly doctrine, and perfect moral.

(1) The Areopagus; one of the quarters of the city. The Sen ate there sat; in consequence of which it assumed the name.

Her columned temples, elegantly grand,
Her speaking statues, and her sculptured **walls.**
The Herald of the name of Christ appears
Upon that theatre which once was trod
By Socrates, by Plato "the Divine,"
And by the Attic sages of past times;
And still with wise, and learned, and bright **names**
And eloquent, adorned. How mused he there,
Surrounded by the memories of the dead
And glories of the living, while, unknown,
Waiting for Silas and for Timothy!
The scene presented to his view—of Gods,
Fashioned with beauteous forms, and polished **grace,**
Claiming the worship of the wise and low,
Idolatrous—how grieved he to behold!
Athens so spiritual, and yet, alas!
So superstitious!—How he burned to raise
Her proud aspiring mind to the high God. **(1)**

First, he disputed in the Synagogue
With Jew and Proselyte, and every day
With those who heard him in the market-place.
Among this number were philosophers,
Epicurèans and stern Stoics, who,
Listening, said: "What doth this talker mean?" (2)

(1) *Athènes,* writes a celebrated French commentator, *étoit la ville du monde la plus spirituelle; elle étoit, en même temps, la plus idolâtre.*

(2) The original Greek means, *sower of words*—σπερμολογος. They were, indeed, themselves vain *talkers.* Such philosophers are the most useless of men. If the whole race were extinguished, society would suffer less than by the loss of a good laborer



And others: "He appears to announce new Gods;"
Because he spake of JESUS, from the tomb
Arisen, triumphant, never more to die.
And curious to hear him fully tell,
Before the assembled wisdom of the land,
Of his strange doctrines, they conducted him
Before the Areopagus, and said: (1)
"May we inquire—for much we wish to know—
What this new doctrine is thou speakest of?
We heard thee utter things, which to our ears
Seem marvellous: we ask thee to explain."

All Athens—citizens and strangers, too—
Were in commotion; all were occupied
With these absorbing questions: naught was heard
In conversation, in the market-place,
At home, abroad, and every where—but this.

(1) This is the first of the three grand theatres upon which God wished St. Paul to declare his name: the Areopagus of Athens, the great council of Jews at Jerusalem, and the tribunal of Cæsar at Rome. Thus had he to combat all that wit the most refined, passions the most furious, and power the most arbitrary, could array against him. He did every thing in Him who strengthened him. (Phil. iv. 13.)

It is not decided whether St. Paul was conducted before the tribunal itself, or merely to that quarter of the city called the Areopagus, which was the principal *rendezvous* of the Athenians, and where all might have an opportunity of hearing him explain the doctrines of which he was the bearer and defender. The natural character of the Athenians is here graphically developed; that of inquiry, or rather, curiosity to hear any thing intellectual or elevating: a character which grew out of the schools of philosophy for which they were distinguished, and which communicated itself to the populace. I am inclined to follow the general opinion, that Paul pleaded before the tribunal itself.

The Senators of Athens took their seats—
Grave, philosophic, venerable men—
Within the Areopagus. Then Paul—
Ambassador from Heaven—appeared sublime,
Standing with inspiration on his brow,
While thousands hung promiscuously around,
With breathless, fixed attention,—and thus spake:

"Ye men of Athens! in all things, I see,
Too much to superstition ye are given;
For, passing through your beauteous capital,
Contemplating the statues of your Gods,
An altar—wrought most gracefully indeed—
But bearing, sculptured in proud characters,
This strange inscription: 'To THE UNKNOWN GOD,' (1)
Met my astonished gaze. What ye adore,
But know not, that I come to announce to you.
I come to preach that God, by whose vast power
The universe was formed—the Lord of all—
Of these bright heavens, and of this varied earth.
He dwelleth not in temples reared by men; (2)

(1) St. Jerome says that this altar was dedicated *to the unknown Gods*, (Diis incognitis.) It is true, there was such an altar at Athens; but the manner in which St. Paul speaks, leaves no room to doubt that there was one *to the unknown God*. Lucian, or whoever is the author of *Philopatris*, speaks as having seen it. Who this Deity was, in the idea of the Athenians, to whom they had erected this altar, there can be nothing but conjecture. Taking the inscription literally, we will find that the application of it to the true God could not be more just. The name of God belongs to Him alone: and of all those deities to whom Athens gave the title of God, He was the only one "Unknown."

(2) God dwells, in a special manner, in the temples consecrated

Nor standeth He in need of honors paid
By human-kind—for it is He who gives
Life, respiration, being, and all things:
Who, from one man, hath peopled all the earth
With reasonable creatures, the fixed times,
And habitations, limiting below,
That they may seek for Him, and, as it were,
Feel after Him,—though far away from us (1)
He be not;—for in Him we live and move,
And have our being: as Aratus sings—
One of your poets: *We his offspring are.* (2)
We being, then, the offspring of that God,
Must not imagine the Divinity
Like to your statues, graven in silver, gold,
Or stone, by the devices and the art of men. (3)
That God, who, during many ages past

to Him, but He *is not shut up* in them. This is the meaning of St. Paul. He speaks for the instruction of the pagans, who imagined no other presence of their Gods than that by which they were circumscribed by the particular place which they occupied.

(1) Although God is invisible, we may know Him by reflection and by reasoning, which is, as it were, the *feeling about* of the soul: just as a blind man, by feeling, may find any article of furniture in his room.

(2) Aratus was a Greek poet and astronomer. His poem on the *phenomena* is extant, and was translated into Latin verse by Cicero.

Offspring of God; that is, His work. For the human body and soul were not produced out of the substance of the Deity.

(3) The workman is always more excellent than his work. Wherefore, if man, considering his soul, which is his more noble part, cannot be represented in figures of marble or metal, how much less can God, the Creator of souls, and the purest of Spirits! This is the reasoning of St. Paul.

Of ignorance, seemed at human crime to wink,
Declareth that the time is come at length,
When penance, in all places, must be done:
Because His wisdom hath marked out a day,
Wherein to judge, in equity, the world,
Through Him appointed, giving faith to all,
By raising Him victorious from the dead."

Thus far attentively the Athenians heard:
But when the resurrection of the dead
Paul—with his startling eloquence—proclaimed,
The chain of hushed attention, suddenly,
Was burst asunder: some the awful truth
Indignant mocked; while others, half-convinced,
Promised to hear him, at some future time,
Again upon this matter. So, no more
Paul added—but the august assembly left. (1)

Yet were there of the number who believed,
And trampling pagan wisdom, followed Paul.
First among these—a light to endless times—
Shines out the name of Dionysius,

Nevertheless, we may represent God under the different figures in which the Scriptures tell us he appeared to men. But these figures do not resemble Him, as the pagans believed their statues resembled the Gods.

Catholics have never, for a moment, believed that the Holy Ghost resembles a dove.

(1) Some interpreters are of opinion that Paul was denounced, like Socrates, in a formal manner. But this is not probable: otherwise such a denunciation would have been terminated by a sentence either of absolution or condemnation.

The Senator—the Areopagite : (1)
And next of Damaris, a Grecian maid ;
And others with them, whom we may not name.

The gospel-seed at Athens now was sown, (2)
And the first fruits thereof the Apostle reaped.
This was the appointed time to scatter forth,
Throughout another region, that same seed,
Where in luxurious harvests it will spread.
Paul bade farewell to Athens, and arrived
At Corinth. There he met a certain Jew
Whose name was Aquila, in Pontus born,
Who, with his wife Priscilla, had, of late,
Returned from Italy, having fled from Rome,
By a decree of Claudius expelled, (3)

(1) It is now agreed that St. Dionysius, Bishop and Apostle of Persia, is different from the Areopagite. All that we know of the latter is that he was the first Bishop of Athens, and that he suffered martyrdom—some say under Hadrian, and others, more probably, under Domitian.

Who the Grecian woman, Damaris, was, history does not inform us: whether a maiden, or the wife of Dionysius, as some have surmised, I know not upon what authority, remains as unknown as are the names and persons of the converts mentioned so briefly by St. Luke in these words: *and others with them.* And these were all whom the inspired eloquence of Paul convinced! only one among the members of the tribunal, (which, *en passant*, I may add, in confirmation of its being styled above in the verse, the *Hill of Mars*, is called by Ovid, the *Martis forense tribunal*,) one female, and a few other listeners among the crowd that flocked to hear him, and many for the second time. How many have perished for not profiting by the *first* such opportunity of knowing the truth!

(2) Chap. xviii.

(3) Suetonius states, that the Jews were banished from Rome

With all his brother-Jews: to these Paul came,
And lodged with them beneath their roof, and wrought
At making tents—this was the trade of both. (1)

Meanwhile, on every Sabbath he discoursed,
As usual, in the synagogue; the name
Of the Lord Jesus blending with his speech:
And reasoned also with the Jews and Greeks.
And when from Macedonia were come
Silas and Timothy, with earnest force

on account of the troubles they there excited, *impulsore Chresto*, at the instigation of *Chrest*. In this he betrays a two-fold ignorance: one of the name of Christ, whom he called *Chrest;* the other of the period of his death, which occurred many years previous to the troubles of which he makes him the instigator. We find here, however, the true cause of their banishment, viz.: the insurrection of the Jews against those of their nation who had embraced Christianity. Claudius, without examining who were culpable or not, expelled them all. This banishment did not continue long. When St. Paul went to Rome for the first time, he found Jews residing there; and we learn from his epistle to the Romans, which was written before the journey, that Aquila and his wife had gone back to Rome, as he sends his salutations to them in that city.

(1) He had learned this trade, following the usage of the Pharisees, who were obliged, by their regulations, to have a trade; in this respect they were praiseworthy, whether the object was to gain a livelihood, or to prevent idleness.

Paul labored, says St. Chrysostom, *and preached; let us blush, who neither preach nor labor.* He worked, that he might not be an expense to the faithful, although he had a right to be supported by them. There are some who are nourished, and grow fat on the property of the Church, says Father De Ligny, and who do nothing What a contrast! St. Paul has, indeed, had noble imitators of his disinterestedness, in all ages and places.

And vehemence divine, Paul preached abroad,
Showing the Jews that JESUS is the CHRIST.
But, as they contradicted and blasphemed,
Shaking his garments with indignant zeal, (1)
"Your blood be on your guilty heads," he cried, (2)
"For of it I am clean and innocent:
Henceforth unto the Gentiles I will go."

And yet a hope—for hope had not expired
Within his bosom, for his own dear race—
Kept him, though parting with them, not far off.
But, still, he went; and with a man whose name
Was Titus Justus—one who worshipped God—
Made his abode, hard by the synagogue.
There, midst the obstinacy of the Jews,
Some signal triumphs to the Christian cause
Consoled his spirit, and his labor crowned.
Crispus, the Ruler of the synagogue
And all his house embraced the faith of Christ

(1) A sign of detestation and imprecation, of which we find many instances in holy writ. Its signification is expressed by these words of Nehemias: *I shook my lap and said, So may God shake every man that shall not accomplish his word, out of his house, and out of his labors; thus may he be shaken out and become empty. And all the multitude said, Amen.* (2 Esdras, v. 13.)

(2) That is to say, let your loss be imputed to yourselves. St. Paul is innocent of it, because he did all that he could to save them. If he had not, he would have been culpable, and God would have required their *blood* of him. This is the expression of Ezekiel, used by St. Paul in this place, as also in the twentieth chapter. Ministers of religion! beware lest you may be called upon at the last day, to answer for the loss, by your neglect, of those under your care.

Of the Corinthians many in the Lord
Believed, and were baptized. By his own hands,
Crispus, and Gaius, and the family
Of Stephanas—none other: but the rest,
By his associates in the ministry. (1)

Much hardship, Paul, much suffering endured,
At Corinth,—the details are veiled from sight:
And yet not wholly; for his sacred pen
Hath traced the picture of his ceaseless fear,
And pain, and trembling, and infirmity. (2)
But heaven sustained him; and still more to cheer
His anxious heart, the Lord appeared at night,
In a resplendent vision, and thus spake:
"Fear not; speak on, and do not hold thy peace,
For I am with thee; and no man shall dare
To hurt thee in this city: for I have
Much people here who know and fear my name."
Encouraged thus, at Corinth he remained
For no short time, teaching the word of God. (3)

The promise made by Heaven was now fulfilled:
The Jews conspired, but could not do him harm.
'Tis true, they seized upon him, and by force
Dragged him, tumultuous, to the judgment-seat

(1) *I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; and . . . also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other; for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach.* (1 Cor. i. 14, 16, 17.)

(2) *And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.* (1 Cor. ix. 3.)

(3 He continued there eighteen months.

Of Gallio, the Proconsul, charged with crime: (1)
"This man," they clamored, "would persuade the
world
To give God worship which the law forbids."
Paul was beginning to respond, when thus
Gallio addressed them: "Were it of some guilt,
Some heinous deed, O Jews, he stood accused,
With reason should I hear you patiently;
But if the questions be of words, and names, (2)
And things relating to your law, 'tis yours
To look into them; they come not within
The scope of my tribunal: of such things
I will not judge." And with this reprimand,
He drove them, murmuring, from the judgment-seat.

Thwarted in this conspiracy, they let fall
The weight of their revenge upon the head
Of Sosthenes, chief of the synagogue. (3)

(1) Titus Annœus Gallio, brother of Seneca the philosopher, took his name from a certain Gallio by whom he had been adopted. The influence of his brother obtained for him the proconsulate of Achaia. He was afterwards disgraced, and died by his own hands.

(2) What he meant by *words* and *names*, we know not—perhaps he himself knew as little. He, perhaps, might have understood that the question was, whether the *names* of Messiah and Christ were applicable to Jesus—a pagan might well style this a question of *names*.

(3) The ordinary Greek copies say that it was the *Greeks* that beat Sosthenes; but this is not conformable to the Vulgate, or the more ancient Greek MSS. It is much more probable that Sosthenes was beaten on account of his adhering to Paul, by the Jews themselves. This is the opinion of the Church. See the *Roman Martyrology*, 28th November.

Before the judgment-seat of Gallio
They rushed on him and violently beat,
While the Proconsul heedlessly looked on. **(1)**

Yet many days at Corinth Paul delayed,
When, of the brethren taking his farewell,
For Syria he embarked,—his head being shorn
In Cenchra, (for he there had made a vow,)— **(2)**
By Aquila attended on his way,
And by Priscilla; whom, when they arrived
At Ephesus, he left there; and forthwith
Entering himself into the synagogue,
He reasoned with the people who desired

Crispus is likewise called the Ruler of the synagogue; whence it follows that there were more than one, or that at Corinth there were several synagogues.

(1) Gallio has been praised for his mildness, because he would not listen to the accusers of St. Paul; for his reserve, because he refused to judge in matters of religion; and for his prudence, because he would not meddle with an affair which he knew nothing about. But his indifference at the sight of the ill-treatment of Sosthenes, discovers the true motive of his conduct, viz.: a sovereign contempt for the Jews and every thing that concerned them.

(2) From the wording of the text, it would seem doubtful whether it was Paul or Aquila who made the vow. All interpreters agree that it was the Apostle. This was the vow of the Nazarenes. It consisted in letting the hair grow, and abstaining from wine and intoxicating drinks, during the time that the vow obligated. If, before the term had expired, any legal impurity was contracted, the time preceding that was not counted. It was necessary to shave the head anew, and begin again. The sacrifices enjoined are mentioned in *Numbers* vi. It was by condescension that St. Paul practised this Jewish devotion, to which no one was obliged. It was at Cenchra, the eastern port of Corinth, that he made the vow, before his embarkation

That for a longer time he would remain.
To their request he yielded not assent,
But bidding them adieu, "If God so will,
To Ephesus I will return," he said.
Landing at Cesarea, he went up,
Rejoicing, to Jerusalem, to see
And to salute that venerable Church.
To Antioch he then proceeded, whence,
After a short sojourn, he onward moved,
And traversed Phrygia and Galatia,
Strengthening the scattered brethren in their faith. (1)

There happened, at this juncture, to arrive
At Ephesus, a Jew, Apollo named,—
Alexandrìa was his place of birth,—
For eloquence renowned, and deeply versed (2)
And mighty in the Scriptures: he had been
Instructed in the way of God; his words
Sparkled with zeal; and earnestly he taught
The truths that are of Jesus, though, meanwhile,
He knew no baptism, saving that of John. (3)

(1) Pastoral visits; a necessary means to correct evil and preserve good. Strictly should they be attended to by the Prelates, who have charge of the Pastors as well as the flocks, and by the Pastors, who are to give an account to their Prelates. Let them study the indefatigable zeal and never-shrinking perseverance of St. Paul and the other Apostles.

(2) *Mighty*—that is to say, not only skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures, but knowing how to employ them with power and success. Happy they, in these times of incredulity, who possess this double qualification!

(3) Others were in the same error, or rather the same ignorance. Whether these had received the baptism of John in Judea,

With boldness in the synagogue he spake;
And when Priscilla heard, and Aquila,
They took him to their home, where they explained
More diligently all the way of God. (1)
Into Achaia he departed then,
With kindly letters to the brethren there
From those by whom instructed in the faith.
In him a powerful support they found;
An advocate triumphant of the truth;
For from the Scriptures he convinced the Jews,
In open day, that Jesus is the CHRIST.

What Paul conditionally promised, that (2)

or whether his disciples had conferred baptism at Ephesus, we do not know—nor is the question of much importance.

(1) Apollo, so versed in the Scriptures, learns a capital truth from two laics, both artisans, and one a woman. They, simple and ignorant people, had been instructed by St. Paul. Study, without the teaching of the Pastors, is not sufficient for the learned: the teaching of the Pastors, without learning, suffices for the simple. Thus the latter are led, without effort, to the knowledge of all truths; and the former are protected against the inflation of science, and the errors of the human mind. Admirable medium! proper and necessary for all men.

Still the science of Apollo was not unuseful to him. After being fully instructed, it made him a Doctor of the Church—what Priscilla and Aquila never could become.

The reader may now understand the words of St. Paul: (1 Cor. iii. 6:) *I have planted, Apollo hath watered.* So great was the fruit produced at Corinth by the labors of Apollo, that the faithful equalled him, in their conversations, to Paul and Peter: *Each one of you sayeth, I indeed am of Paul; but I of Apollo; and I, again, of Cephas.* (1 Cor. i. 12.) St. Paul justly censures these partialities—forgetting in them Jesus Christ, the Master of all, the Pastor of pastors.

(2) Chap. xix.

God now decreed should come to pass. While yet
Apollo was at Corinth, going through
The upper provinces of Asia, (1)
To Ephesus Paul shaped his course again.
There some disciples still he found, to whom
This question he addressed: "Have ye received,
Since ye embraced the faith, the Holy Ghost?"
"Whether there be a Holy Ghost," they said,
"We have not even heard."—To whom again:
"With what baptism, then, have ye been baptized?" (2)
"With John's."—Then Paul: "The people John baptized
With the baptism of penance, that they should

(1) These were Galatia and Phrygia, of which mention is made above. They are situated to the north of Ephesus, which was, as it were, the metropolis of Asia Minor. On account of their situation, they are here styled the upper "coasts," or provinces.

(2) Does not this question clearly signify that they could not have received the true baptism—*Christian* baptism? Paul conferred it afterwards, *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ;* wherefore, in the baptism which was given in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the Holy Ghost, and consequently the three divine persons, were expressly named. Protestants have pretended that the baptism of John had the same virtue as that of Christ, and was administered in the same manner. If this had been the case, Apollo, who *knew no baptism but John's*, would not have required fuller instruction; and these Ephesians could not have replied, that they had never heard of the Holy Ghost. This error has given rise to the following canon of the Council of Trent: *If any one should say that the baptism of John possessed the same virtue as the baptism of Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (Sess. 7.)

The words of St. Paul teach us that John exacted of all whom he baptized, an explicit faith in the Messiah, then on earth, who

Believe in Him, who after was to come—
And that was JESUS." Having heard these things,
With water, in the name of JESUS CHRIST,
They were regenerated; and when Paul
Imposed his hands, the Holy Ghost came down,
And divers tongues they spake, and prophesied;
These favored brethren were, in number, twelve.
Then to the synagogue repairing, Paul
Spake fearlessly; for three successive months
Disputing with the Jews, exhorting all
In what concerned God's kingdom. Well disposed—
Unlike their nation spread through other parts—
Most heard, complacently, the word of truth.
Yet some were hardened and incredulous,
Who publicly denied the way of God:
From these Paul separated, and withdrew (1)
His followers; and daily in the school
Disputed, of a man Tyrannus named.
His conferences there two years were held,
Frequented by the Gentiles and the Jews,
Through whom all Asia heard the word of God.
Meanwhile God wrought unprecedented signs

was to impart the remission of sins, for which his own baptism was but a remote disposition. *Behold the Lamb of God*, &c.

(1) Paul did not fly from them; but deemed it prudent to put an end to a disputation which caused the incredulous to hear new blasphemies, and the neophytes to be exposed to temptation. The naturally ardent and fearless character of St. Paul was governed by the influences of divine grace. Controversies before mixed audiences, may sometimes be unavoidable: then must they be sustained. But often do those which are brought about by too much ardor of temperament, produce the effects which St. Paul carefully studied to prevent.

And signal wonders by the hand of Paul;
So that the aprons on his person worn,
And handkerchiefs, when to the sick applied,
Healed their diseases; and the spirits dark
Were, by their virtue, driven from the possessed. (1)

This power some exorcists of the Jews (2)
Essayed to imitate; they went about
Invoking over those who were possessed,
The name of JESUS,—speaking to the spirits:
"In virtue of the power of Jesus, whom
Paul preacheth, I conjure you." Among those
Who practised this, were Sceva's seven sons,— (3)
A Jew and Chief of Priests. To them replied
The evil spirit: "JESUS well I know,
And PAUL I know,—but tell me, who are ye?"
At that same instant, the unhappy man
O'er whom the wicked spirit mastery held,
Leaped on them furiously, and forced them both,
Naked and wounded, from the house to flee. (4)

(1) The efficacy of these *relics* was certainly wonderful. They wrought miracles. Would certain declaimers against the use of relics now in the Catholic Church, have believed if they had seen them? What will Protestantism answer to this? The *Sudaria* may be translated—handkerchiefs; but literally, linen used for wiping off the perspiration. *Semicinctia* were aprons; which probably St. Paul used when at work.

(2) The Jews had exorcists who used, with success, certain formularies of conjuration, taught by Solomon.

(3) Sceva perhaps was the chief of the twenty-four sacerdotal families—or, it might be, at the head of the sacerdotal order established at Ephesus.

(4) When John said to Jesus, "We have seen a man who is

When to the Jews and Gentiles this was known
At Ephesus, with terror all were seized,
And the Lord Jesus' name was magnified.
Many believed, and to the Apostle came,
Confessing and declaring all their deeds; (1)
Others who to the magic art were given— (2)
That dark and curious science—brought their books,

not one of ours, expelling devils in thy name, and we have prevented him." Jesus replied, "*Hinder him not.*" (Mark ix. 37, 38.) To answer thus was to approve of what that man was doing; and we cannot doubt that he did disapprove of these, since he suffered them to be so ill-treated by the devil,—and still the action was exactly the same. But circumstances may have made that which was serviceable to the faith on one side, prejudicial on the other. Different intentions could produce, in the same action, essential differences. The man whom Jesus would not hinder, on account of the principle of faith that was in him, had in view the relief of those whom he exorcised. The sons of Sceva probably regarded the invocation of the name of Jesus as a secret charm; and had in view nothing but the glory of succeeding in his exorcisms, and, perhaps, the profit he might receive. In this case, he deserved to be treated as he was.

(1) The Greek and Latin word signifies properly that they *announced* their deeds; that is, that they made a public confession. This they did from fervor and humiliation; for public confession was never of precept. The Council of Trent does not refer to this example as a proof of sacramental confession.

(2) *Magic*—called by the ancients the *curious* science, on account of the inclination of men to give to their crimes names which palliate the heinousness of them. Thus, at the present day, speak of a man buried in debauch, and he is called *dissolute*. Of all the arts, that of magic was the most abominable. The books treating of this science were publicly consumed: and what a blessing to our age would it be, if all the miserable, loose, and infidel "cheap literature" which spreads over the land, was consigned to the flames!

And publicly consigned them to the flames. (1)
Widely and mightily thus the word of God
Diffused itself, and grew, and was confirmed.

These triumphs won, Paul, by the Spirit led,
Resolved through Macedonia to pass,
And through Achaia, to Jerusalem.
"Where when again I find myself," he mused,
"The world's proud mistress I must visit—ROME."
Deputing into Macedonia
Two of his ministering brethren, Timothy,
And one Erastus named—in Asia
For some time longer he himself remained.

No small disturbance, at this juncture, rose
About the way of God: a silversmith,
By name Demetrius, who with cunning art,
Small silver temples of Diana made,
And thereby brought great profit to his craft, (2)
Assembling all the workmen of his trade,
Harangued them thus: "My fellow-craftsmen, hear;
Our gain, ye know, dependeth on our trade;
Yet have ye seen, and every day ye learn,
That this man Paul, by his persuasion, hath
At Ephesus, and through all Asia, drawn

(1) Their price was estimated at forty thousand pieces of silver.

(2) It appears that these representations were in relief. If, as some imagine, they had been plates, or medals, how could so many workmen have been engaged in a business which required so little work?

Great multitudes from the immortal Gods,
Asserting that the works of our own hands
Are not divinities. But what is worse,
Not only on our craft the loss will fall,
But that majestic pile, that temple proud, (1)
Reared to the great Diana, will be spurned;
The majesty and glory of her name,
Whom Asia worshippeth and all the world,
Shall be obscured, and finally decay."

These words inflamed their anger, and they cried,
"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"
Throughout the city vast confusion spread:
Crowds to the theatre impetuous rushed, (2)
Dragging with them Paul's two associates,
Caius and Aristarchus—Macedonians.

To rescue them, and calm this raging storm,
Before the people Paul would have appeared,
But the disciples checked him; and his friends—
Some of the ruling men of Asia—
Conjured him not within the theatre
His person venture, and expose his life.

(1) Every reader knows that the temple of Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was 425 feet in length, 220 in breadth, and supported by 127 columns, each 60 feet high. Pliny adds, that the mere mention of the beauties it contained, would fill several volumes. It was pillaged and burned by the Greeks, under Gallienus.

(2) The place where the theatre was situated, and where public exhibitions were given. In this place, also, the people held their meetings.

Great was the uproar: loud discordant cries
On every side arose—some one thing shouted,
And some another;—wild confusion reigned
Amid the noisy multitude, of whom
The greater part knew not why they had thronged.

The Jews, alarmed, lest on their heads should break
The fury of this tempest, from the crowd
Drew one of theirs, and forward thrusted him:
This man, named Alexander, with his hand
Beckoned for silence, that he might be heard; (1)
But knowing him to be a Jew, the crowds
Blended their voices in one thundering shout—
"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"
Peal upon peal this acclamation rang,
Fearful and hoarse, for two incessant hours.
The temples, theatre, and public streets,
Columns and statues shook amid the roar:
"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

The elements of tumult lashed to rage,
What power can appease? Had but one voice
Shrieked out, "*Exterminate our enemies!*"
Blood would have flowed in torrents—carnage dire
And desolation o'er the city stalked.

But now, to calm and lay the threatening storm,

(1) His design was, no doubt, to caution them not to confound the cause of the Jews with that of Paul and the Christians. All were, however, equally the declared enemies of Diana, and all the pagan divines

Was the stern study of the Magistrates:
At length they checked its fury and appeased.
The multitudes to silence were restored,
When, standing in their midst, the town-clerk spake:
"Ephesian citizens! what man is there
Who doth not know that our proud Ephesus
Worships, with special pomp, and honor due,
The great Diana, offspring of high Jove!
This is notorious—this no one can doubt:
Then why this dread commotion? Let it cease:
Be quiet—act not rashly—for these men (1)
Whom ye have riotously hither dragged,
Neither of sacrilege, nor blasphemy
Against your goddess, can be guilty proved.
But if Demetrius and his tradesmen have
An accusation against any one,
By the Proconsuls let the case be heard:
The courts are open—they can plead it there.
If any other question should require
Investigation, let appeal be made
To a legitimate assembly; for
The vast, tumultuous gathering here to-day,

(1) St. Chrysostom remarks, that in order to calm the people, he had recourse to an officious lie. It is probable, however, that St. Paul and his companions contented themselves with saying that the *gods made by human hands are not true gods.* But it is not probable that they inveighed particularly against Diana. Wisdom directs that the truth should be proposed in a manner that may not be revolting to prejudiced minds; and the discourse of St. Paul before the Areopagus shows very clearly that he did not disregard these necessary precautions.

Looks like sedition, as we can allege
Naught—if required—to vindicate this mob."

This speech, with flattery, caution, menace fraught,
Achieved the wished-for end—the tumult died.
And peacefully the multitude dispersed.

But yet in safety Paul could now remain (1)
At Ephesus no longer: other parts
Were still to be enlightened. When to peace
The city was restored, together came
All the disciples; whom with earnest zeal
Having exhorted—by the Holy Ghost
Guided—to Ephesus he bade farewell,
And shaped for Macedonia his course.
Throughout that country journeying, he addressed
The faithful as he passed; till into Greece
He penetrated: there three months he spent, (2)
And would have sailed for Syria; but the Jews
Laid wait for him; wherefore he changed his course,
Resolved through Macedonia to return.
Thither, as his companions, went the son
Of Pyrrhus of Berea; Sopater,
Secundus, Aristarchus, Timothy,
Gaius of Derbe—Thessalonians;
And Trophimus and Tychicus of Asia. (3)

(1) Chap. xx.

(2) Into Achaia, which was Greece properly so called; though, in a more extended sense, Macedonia was a part of Greece.

(3) The names of all these companions of St. Paul are in the Roman Martyrology The city of Arles honors Trophimus as her

These, having gone before, at Troas stayed,
Awaiting us. The Azymes being past,
We from Philippi sailed, and in five days
Joined them at Troas, where seven we abode. (1)

Upon the day that first dawns on the week, (2)
When, as our wont, together we had met
To celebrate the breaking of the bread,
Paul—on the morrow to depart prepared—
Discoursed before the brethren, and prolonged
His speech till midnight. Many lamps burned bright
Throughout the chamber. And a certain youth
Named Eutychus, who on the window sat
During Paul's long discourse, being oppressed

Apostle. Of him Pope Zosimus says, that his preaching was the source from which the streams of faith spread through Gaul. Zosimus regarded Trophimus as the first Apostle of the Gauls. We leave to the learned, however, to decide whether Trophimus of Arles was the disciple of St. Paul, or another Trophimus, sent into Gaul two centuries later.

(1) Here St. Luke resumes the first person, "we:" he, of course, again joined St. Paul. He separated from him when the Apostle started from Philippi into Macedonia. From that time to the present, about five years elapsed. What he did during that interval, we know not. Perhaps he was collecting materials for his Gospel, in regard to which he informs us that he consulted with those *who from the beginning had seen* the things which he was to relate.

Troas is the name of the country of which ancient Troy was the capital. There was another city of this name on the sea-coast, not far from the ruins of Troy.

(2) The first day of the week had already taken the place of the Sabbath, and was the day of the Lord for Christians. But it did not yet bear the name; which, however, it soon acquired, as we find it in the *Apocalypse*, i. 10.

With sleep profound, precipitate fell down
From the third story to the street below,
Whence, as if dead, they carried him away.
But hastening down, Paul laid himself upon him,
Embraced the body tenderly, and said:
"Do not be troubled, for his soul is here."

Then going up again, the bread he brake, (1)
And tasted: until day woke in the heavens,
He held long converse; and then bade adieu.
The youth was living—and all were consoled.

We then, embarking, spread our sails for Assos, (2)
Where 'twas arranged that we should take in Paul—
For he by land proposed to travel: thence,
With him, for Mytelene we our course
Pursued; where, setting sail, we came to land
Upon the following morn, over against
The port of Scio; and, next day, arrived
At Samos,—and ere the succeeding eve
Sank in the deep, Miletus bade us hail;—
For Paul, too long lest he might be detained
In Asia, had through Ephesus resolved
To pass, hast'ning, if possible, to spend

(1) After the fraction of the Eucharistic bread, St. Paul took some nourishment, following the usage of the primitive times, when the faithful, after having received communion, together took a repast which was styled *Agape*, a Greek word signifying charity.

(2) Assos, a maritime city of Troas. Mytelene, a considerable town in the isle of Lesbos, whence this island took the name of Metelina. Scio and Samos, two islands of the Archipelago.

The Pentecost-day at Jerusalem. (1)
To Ephesus the Ancients, at his call, (2)
Came from Miletus; whom, when gathered round,
He thus addressed: "You know how, from the day
When first I entered Asia, I have lived (2)
Among you all the time; how I have served
The Lord with tears and all humility,
Amid the dangers and conspiracies
The Jews against me plotted: and ye know
That nothing profitable have I failed
Or publicly or privately to preach;
Proclaiming and to Gentile and to Jew,
Penance towards God, and in CHRIST JESUS faith.
And now behold, being in the SPIRIT bound, (3)

(1) St. Paul went to celebrate the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem: that is, the *Christian* and not the *Jewish* Pentecost. This is the opinion of St. Epiphanius, and other ecclesiastical writers. If it be objected that the Christian Pentecost could be celebrated anywhere, I answer that still it might be celebrated with more devotion on the very cenacle on which the Holy Spirit first descended on the Apostles.

(2) The Bishops and Priests; for it appears that those of the circumjacent cities were likewise invited. It was not possible for the multitude of faithful to transport themselves from one city to another, nor was their presence necessary. The Apostle labored efficaciously for their sanctification, in laboring for that of their Pastors.

The discourse of St. Paul is a vindication of his conduct at Ephesus. The Saints see so distinctly that all the good that is in them comes from God, that they are not tempted to attribute any part of it to themselves. This was the case with St. Paul in an eminent degree.

(3) Some understand by *bound*, the chains he was to be bound with in Jerusalem, which his anticipated knowledge rendered, as it were, present. Others think that *bound by the Holy Ghost*, sig-

I wend my way back to Jerusalem,
Where what awaits me I cannot foresee, (1)
Save that the Holy Ghost, in every town,
Witnesseth to me, saying: irons and
Afflictions wait me at Jerusalem.
But of these tribulations I fear none,
Nor count my life more precious than myself, (2)
Provided only that my destined course
I may consummate, and the ministry
By the LORD JESUS to my care consigned,
To preach the Gospel of the grace of God.
But one sad truth I know—that all of you
Among whom I have gone, preaching abroad
God's kingdom, shall behold my face no more.
Wherefore I take you witnesses, this day,
That I am innocent of the blood of all;
For all the way and counsel of the Lord

nifies that he was led to Jerusalem by the Spirit of God, and, in some sense, *forced to go thither* by the Holy Ghost.

He did not know in detail the sufferings that awaited him in Jerusalem; nor was he certain whether or not he should lose his life. In many cities through which he passed, he had met prophets, (for they were numerous among the primitive Christians,) who announced his future tribulations at Jerusalem.

(1) What is this *life* which he distinguishes from *himself*, if not his immortal soul, which, by the loss of temporal life, will enter into the possession of eternal life?

(2) And yet, some years after, writing to the Philippians, he tells them that he hopes to see them soon; and some parts of his Epistles give us to understand, in effect, that he did return to the east. This has caused some interpreters to believe that it was only by conjecture that he said the Philippians would never more *see his face*. But he speaks too affirmatively to admit merely of conjecture. *I know*, he asserts.

Have I unsparingly to you declared.
Then to yourselves take heed, and to the flock (1)
Wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops,
To rule the Church of God, with his own blood
Which he hath purchased: for full well I know,
That after my departure ravening wolves (2)
Into the fold will enter; and, alas!
Even of your own selves shall men arise,
Speaking perverse things, leading in their train
Deluded followers:—ye, therefore, watch—
Mindful of my example. For three years
I have not ceased to admonish, day and night,
Each one among you; whom I now commend (3)
To God and to his grace; who can build up
The edifice begun, and give you part
In his inheritance, with all the saints.
Of no man gold or silver have I asked,
Or yet apparel, as full well ye know:
For all things needful to myself and those

(1) *He who knoweth not how to govern his house*, writes the Apostle to Timothy, (1 Tim. iii.) *how will he rule the Church of God?* and much less, if he cannot govern himself. This advice is general for all times and all Pastors: but here he recommends a redoubled vigilance. He is about predicting persecutions, and seduction from the truth. The Pastors must, likewise, *take heed to themselves:* for Pastors, or Bishops, as they are, what are they but men? and, like other mortals, liable to fall into errors and sin.

(2) "*Ravening wolves*" are declared persecutors, teachers of perverse doctrines, heretics. The Church began with them, and they will finish only with the Church.

(3) In the text it is translated, *and the word of his grace;* that is, the word of the Gospel. Some commentators (whom I follow) render it merely by: *and to his grace.*

Attending me were furnished by these hands.
This you have witnessed: that by laboring
As I have done, ye should support the weak.
And bear the word of Jesus in your minds:
More blessed 'tis to give than to receive." (1)

He ceased; and kneeling down, with them he prayed:
Then was there bitter weeping among all;
And clinging round Paul's neck with warm embrace
They kissed him, with deep sorrow overcome,
To think no more—according to the word
Himself had uttered—they should see his face
And to the ship they followed him with tears.

(1) St. Paul must have learned this maxim from some one of those who heard it drop from the sacred lips of Jesus, because it is not to be found in the Gospels. And yet there is no doubt that it is cited, not in substance, but in the words themselves, as used by the divine Redeemer.

BOOK FOURTH.[1]

CONTENTS:

Prophecy of Agabus—St. Paul at Jerusalem—The Jews seize on him—The Tribune Lysias rescues him—His discourse to the Jews—The Tribune condemns him to be scourged—He declares himself a Roman citizen—He is struck by order of the High Priest—He curses him—Retracts—Contentions between the Sadducees and Pharisees—Conspiracy against Paul—He is sent to Cæsarea—His accusation and defence before Felix—He is accused before Festus—His answer—His appeal to Cesar—Agrippa and Bernice desire to hear him—His discourse, addressed to Agrippa—He embarks, on his way to Rome—Horrible tempest—The vessel lost—He lands at Malta—Cures the sick—Departs—Arrives at Rome—Assembles the chief men among the Jews—Speaks to them, without fruit—Announces the Gospel to all who listen to him.

THEN from their arms tearing ourselves by force, (2)
We spread our sails, and in a course direct,
Bore down to Coos; (3) thence, the following day,
To Rhodes; and thence to Patara we crossed.
Where, having found a ship about to sail
Into Phœnicia, we forthwith embarked.
Steering in sight of Cyprus, towards the left
We stood away for Syria, till at Tyre—

(1) From the twenty-first to the last chapter, inclusively.

(2) Chap. xxi.

(3) *Coos*—now *Stanchio*—a considerable island of the Archipelago; one of the Cyclades. This was the birth-place of Hippocrates, the prince of physicians; and of Apelles, the greatest painter of antiquity. *Rhodes* is well known. *Patara* is now called *Patera*—a maritime town of ancient Lycia; the birth-place of St. Nicholas.

For there the ship was destined to unlade—
We made the land; and during seven days,
With the disciples tarried in that port.
Through these, the Holy Spirit cautioned Paul (1)
That to Jerusalem he should not proceed.

The seven days expired, and then again
Our journey we continued: on our way
Without the city, followed crowds of brethren,
Bringing their wives and children. On the shore
We kneeled, and fervently together prayed.
Then having bid another long farewell,
The ready ship we mounted. They returned,
Each, sorrowing, to his home. From Tyre we sailed
To Ptolemais, (2) and there one day abode
Among the brethren: on the next we came
To Cæsarea; with the Evangelist—
One of the seven—Philip, there we dwelled, (3)
Whose four young virgin-daughters prophesied. (4)

(1) The Holy Ghost revealed to them the persecutions that there awaited him. They advised him not to expose himself to them: *this* they advised of their own impulse; not by that of the Holy Ghost, whose will it was that he should encounter them, as we saw above.

(2) Since called *St. Jean d'Acre*—a city famed in the history of the Crusades, for the many sieges it sustained.

(3) One of the seven Deacons mentioned in chapters vi. and viii.

(4) This was the accomplishment of the prediction of Joel; *Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.* They were virgins, and therefore better fitted to receive the celestial illuminations. The Church honors them as Saints. St. Jerome, writing against Jovinian, remarks, that the profession of virginity commenced with the beginning of Christianity

While tarrying in that city for some days,
A certain Prophet from Judea came,
Whose name was Agabus: he, seeing Paul, (1)
His girdle took; wherewith his hands and feet
Binding, he spake: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost:
Thus shall the Jews bind, in Jerusalem,
The man whose girdle this is; and into
The Gentiles' hands shall they deliver him."

Hearing these words, we earnestly conjured—
We and the people of the city—Paul,
Not to return back to Jerusalem.
"Why do ye mourn and weep?" he thus replied, (2)
"My heart with grief affecting? For myself,
I am prepared, not only to be bound,
But likewise in Jerusalem to die,

(1) The same who, as we have seen, foretold the famine which was to take place under the Emperor Claudius. It was not unusual for prophets to join to certain words external actions, which rendered their predictions more sensible. These actions were as much inspired as their words, as we learn from the examples of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c.

(2) St. Paul had consented to leave Damascus at the solicitation of his brethren · he yielded to the advice of his friends, by not risking his life in the theatre at Ephesus. Now, neither prayers nor tears can prevent him from facing the fury of the Jews. God wished him, on the two former occasions, not to encounter danger; and now he wills that he should. The different wills of Providence, which were known to him, were the causes of his different conduct. This is the remark of St. Chrysostom.

He cared not for the persecutions he was to encounter, but was overcome by grief at witnessing the tears of his brethren. If it is beautiful to possess such sensibility how glorious is it to conquer it!

If need be, for the name of JESUS CHRIST."
Unable to dissuade him by our tears,
We ceased, and said, "The will of God be done.
After those days, we being now prepared,
Up to Jerusalem, at length, set out
From Cæsarea, followed by some few
Of the Disciples. Among whom was he
Whose name was Mnason,—venerable man—
And old disciple, Cyprian by birth.
With whom it was determined we should lodge.

Safely we reached the fatal capital—
Once holy, now profane—Jerusalem!
When rose the morrow's sun, Paul went to James, (1)
By us attended—and the Ancients there (2)
Were all assembled. He saluted these;
And, in detail, narrated what the Lord
Among the Gentiles, by his ministry,
Had marvellously wrought. Which having heard,
They praised God's name; yet, fearing lest the spread
Of certain rumors,—groundless, it is true,
But yet believed,—the Gospel might retard,
They added these remarks: "Thou seest, brother,

(1) James the *minor*, called the brother of the Lord. All the other Apostles were dispersed. He was the only one who did not quit Jerusalem, of which he was the established Bishop. Thus the first Bishop was the first to observe the law of *residence*. St. Paul paid due homage to his sanctity and dignity. About four years later, St. James was put to death by the Jews. After this crime, Jerusalem had no more Apostles.

(2) The Clergy of Jerusalem. The Greek word signifies both *Ancient* and *Priests*, as has been before observed.

How many thousand Hebrews have believed, (1)
And yet they all are zealots for the law.
Now, they have heard of thee, that thou dost teach
Those Jews among the Gentiles, to depart
From Moses; that they should not circumcise
Their children, nor the ancient rites observe.
What, therefore, must be done? The multitude
Must needs together come; for they will hear
That thou hast come among us: therefore do
As we now counsel. There are here four men, (2)
By vow devoted; take these all with thee,
And with them sanctify thyself, and pay
What may be requisite to shave their heads.
Thus all the world will know and be convinced,

(1) In Greek, *myriads;* (πόσαι μυριάδες:) each myriad numbered ten thousand; which shows how numerous the faithful were in Jerusalem. Still the majority of the inhabitants were incredulous. When St. Paul, speaking to the Jews, says, "*if some among you* have been incredulous,"—this expression, taken in its literal acceptation, would insinuate that the believers were in the majority. This is not, however, meant; but, nevertheless, it shows that the faithful formed a very great proportion of the people.

(2) The vow of the Nazarenes, of which I spoke above. The vow was purely of devotion, but instituted by the Almighty, as related in Numbers vi. St. Paul evinced more attachment to Judaism by observing it, than if he had confined himself to a rigid observation; just as among us, by vowing to keep the evangelical counsels, we give a greater mark of our love of Christianity, than by merely fulfilling its precepts. St. Paul gave a new proof of his zeal for the Mosaic observances, by defraying the expenses incurred. This devotion was not unusual with the Jews; and we see it imitated by Christians, who cause others to make pilgrimages on their account, of which they themselves pay all the expenses

That what they heard concerning thee is false;
That, on the contrary, thou art thyself
Observant of the law. Now, what regards
The Gentiles who believe, we have decreed
That they refrain from all polluted meats,
From fornication, strangled things, and blood."

The law abolished was not yet reproved,—
A thing indifferent—or to be observed,
Or else rejected, as might be required.
Hence Paul acceded to the Ancients' will,
And with him took the vow-devoted men,
With whom he purified himself next day.
Entering the temple, notice he proclaimed
Of the fulfilment of the wonted time,
Till an oblation should be made for all.

The seven days were drawing to their close,
When certain Jews, from Asia who had come,
Seeing him in the temple, furious, roused
The populace and seized him, crying out:
"Help! men of Israel, help! this is the man
Who teacheth every where against our race,
Our law, our temple,—and Gentiles bringing in,
Hath violated this most holy place."

(For with him, in the city, having seen
The Ephesian, Trophimus, the rumor spread,
That to the temple Paul had taken him.)
The city was in uproar; wildly ran
The multitude together. Paul they seized,

And dragging him from out the temple, closed
Immediately the gates, and were about
To slay him on the spot, when tidings reached
The Tribune of the band, that tumult raged,
And vast confusion, in Jerusalem.
With soldiers and centurions he ran
To where the crowds had gathered; and the men,
Seeing the Tribune and the soldiers, ceased
To menace Paul, or beat, as they had done.
The Tribune coming took him, with two chains (1)
Fettering his hands and feet; and then inquired
Who was the prisoner, and what his crime.
But from the murmuring crowd naught could be heard:
Some hoarsely one thing, some another, cried.
Finding, amid this dense, tumultuous mob,
Naught certain could be learned, he gave command,
That to the castle Paul should be conveyed. (2)
And when the stairs he reached, it came to pass,
That by the soldiers he was carried up;
Such was the violence of the multitude,
Rending the welkin with—"Away with him!"

(1) According to the prophecy of Agabus. The *two chains* were, one for his hands, the other for his feet. In consequence of that on his feet, the soldiers were obliged to carry him up the steps of the fortress, as he could not mount quickly enough to escape the violence of the people.

(2) The castle *Antonia*. It was near the temple; and from the summit of its towers every thing passing near the temple could be seen. Herod the Great had embellished and fortified it. He called it *Antonia*, from Mark Antony.

Upon the threshold standing, ere the gates
Were opened of the castle, Paul begged leave
One word to speak: "May I say something to thee?"
In Greek he then addressed the Tribune. "What!
Canst thou speak Greek?" the Tribune asked, amazed.
"Art thou not the Egyptian, (1) who didst rouse,
Before these days, the tumult of a mob,
Seditious, and into the desert lead
Four thousand murderers?" Paul responded, "No:
From Egypt I came not. I am a Jew
Of Tarsus in Cilicia,—no mean place,—
Of which I am a citizen. And now
I pray thee to the people let me speak."
Assent the Tribune granted: on the steps
Paul to the people beckoned with his hands.
Suddenly deep silence being made,
He thus spake to them in the Hebrew tongue:
"Brethren and fathers! hear the account I give." (2)
(Who, when they heard the intrepid prisoner speak
In Hebrew, still more silently gave ear.)
"I am a Jew: the city of my birth
Is Tarsus in Cilicia: but here

(1) Josephus and Eusebius make mention of this Egyptian, who, with four thousand men, went out from Egypt. He was a false prophet and magician, who promised his followers that by one word he would make the walls of Jerusalem totter to the ground. Felix sent an army against him, who slew many of his followers, and took a great number of prisoners. The Egyptian disappeared, and we know not what became of him. The Tribune very reasonably conjectured that Paul might be this impostor, so justly and universally detested.

(2) Chap. xxii.

Was brought up—in Jerusalem—and taught
The law of Moses, at Gamaliel's feet, (1)
And the true spirit of our fathers' law:
And, zealous for that law, as ye this day,
Even unto death I persecuted those
Who walked the way which I am following now;
Binding them all with chains, women and men,
And dooming them to prisons—as is known
To the High Priest and Ancients of the law, (2)
Who will bear testimony; for by them
Letters were given me to our distant brethren,
With which I started for Damascus, thence
To bring, in fetters, to Jerusalem,
All I could seize upon, that duly here
They might be punished. When upon the way—
As drawing nigh that city—about noon, (3)

(1) In the east, the disciples sit on mats at the feet of their masters. Hence the expression, *to approach the feet of any one*, that is, to become the disciple of any one. (See Deuteronomy xxxiii. 3.) Mary the sister of Martha, *sat at the feet of Jesus*, hearing his word. (Luke x. 39.) Gamaliel is the doctor of whom mention is made above, (Acts v.)

(2) The Chief Priest, at this time, was not the same as the one who gave the letters to Paul; and the Apostle was either not aware that the dignity had passed to another, or he appealed to the successor of the former, as having it in his power to substantiate the fact which he mentions. The Greek word which the Vulgate translates *Ancients*, means, literally, the *sacerdotal senate*.

(3) The circumstance of its being noon, proves that the light came from heaven, and was miraculous. We may conceive that, during the night, certain shining appearances might be formed from the exhalations of the earth, which become inflamed in the air: but the brilliant light vith which St. Paul was struck blind in full day, must have been supernatural.

A sudden, brilliant light shone out from heaven,
Encompassing me round; and falling down,
I heard a voice bursting upon my ear:
'*Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me thus?*'
I answered, '*Lord, who art thou?*' and he said.
'*Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*'
They who were with me saw, indeed, the light, (1)
But did not hear the voice. '*What shall I do,*
O Lord?' I asked. '*Arise,*' the Lord replied:
'*Go to Damascus, where thou shalt be told*
The things that thou must do.' Meanwhile the light
So dazzling, blinded me; I could not see.
But my companions, leading by the hand,
Brought me into Damascus; where a man
Named Ananias, following the law,
And irreproachable among the Jews,
Came unto me, and standing by me, said:
'*Look, brother Saul, at me:*' I looked, as bid: (2)
'*Our fathers' God,*' he added, '*hath ordained,*
That thou shouldst know his will, thou shouldst behold
The Just One, and the voice from his own mouth (3)
Shouldst hear; for thou a witness to all men
Shalt be of things which thou hast seen and heard.

(1) He here declares what voice was not heard; namely, the *voice of Him who spake;* for they heard Paul's voice, since it is said (chap. ix.) that they heard a voice.

(2) He looked up, and saw; because, at the first sound of Ananias' voice, he recovered his sight miraculously. (See chap. ix.)

(3) Jesus Christ is called the JUST ONE, by excellence: because he is essentially just, and all justice is derived from him. Jesus Christ is made unto us justice and sanctification, as St Paul declares.

Why then delay? Rise up, and be baptized,
Invoke his name, and wash away thy sins.' (1)
Returning to Jerusalem, it chanced,
While praying in the temple, that my mind
Was in a trance enraptured, and I saw
The Lord, who said unto me: '*Haste,*
And leave Jerusalem—for they will not
Concerning me thy testimony take.'
'*Lord,*' I returned, '*they know full well themselves,*
That I immured in prison and chastised
Those who believed, in every synagogue;
And when thy witness Stephen's blood was shed,
That I stood by, consenting, and the robes
Of those who killed him kept beneath my care.'
But said the Lord, '*Depart: for I will send*
Thee to the Gentile nations far away.'" (2)

Silent the people listened, till the word
"Gentiles" dropped from his lips; when sudden burst
A cry uproarious from the maddened crowds:
"Away with such a man! upon the earth (3)

(1) Baptism effaces sin, and remits the temporal punishment due to sins, both original and actual.

(2) St. Paul, since his conversion, had made three journeys to Jerusalem. In which of these he had his trance, interpreters do not agree. It is pretty evident that it was not in the third, which was the present. It seems more probable that it happened in the first, immediately after he began his mission among the Gentiles.

(3) St. Peter, who reproached them with their crimes, made many thousand converts. St. Paul, who speaks to them with the greatest caution, only enrages them. We may regard, as the

'Twere wrong that he should live!" Amid these cries
Their garments they cast off, and filled the air (1)
With clouds of dust upthrown. The Tribune, then,
Commanded that the prisoner should be brought
Into the castle-walls, and there be scourged
And tortured, to compel him to reveal
The cause of all this tumult; for the tongue (2)
In which Paul spake, he did not understand.
Thongs were already round his body tied,
When the Centurion nigh Paul thus addressed:
"Can, then, a Roman citizen be scourged,
Untried and uncondemned?" Which having heard,
Quick to the Tribune the Centurion
Repaired, inquiring if he knew that Paul,
Condemned to torture, was a citizen
Of Rome? To him the Tribune hurrying came:
"Tell me, art thou a Roman citizen?"
He asked. Paul sternly answered, "Yes."
"The right of citizen dearly I have bought,"
The Tribune added. "I am so by birth,"
Responded Paul: and they who stood prepared

principal cause of this difference, their different vocations. "*He who appointed Peter the Apostle of circumcision, hath appointed me the Apostle of the Gentiles,*" says St. Paul, (Gal. xi.) Their great success was attached to their especial vocations. To this the words of the Lord seem to allude: "*Because they will not receive thy testimony concerning me, . . . unto the Gentiles afar I will send thee.*"

(1) Whether this was their ordinary manner of exhibiting their execration, or whether they were preparing to stone him, does not appear very plain.

(2) We saw above, that Paul addressed the people in the Hebrew language, which the Roman Tribune did not understand.

To inflict the torture fled. The Tribune feared, (1)
For having bound a Roman citizen.
Desirous, on the morrow, to learn why
The Jews had risen against him and accused,
He loosed his chains, and ordered that the Priests,
Together with the Council, should convene:
Before whom thus assembled, Paul was brought. (2)
And, casting round the hall a lofty gaze,
He thus began: "My brethren, to this day,
With a pure conscience in the sight of God, (3)
Have I conversed"——here, interrupting him,
The High Priest ordered those who near him stood, (4)
To smite him on the mouth: whom, in a tone
Of dread denunciation, he addressed:
"God shall strike thee, thou whited wall! To judge
According to the law thou sittest there,
And thou commandest, contrary to law,

(1) His fear teaches us that no one was safe who would maltreat a Roman citizen. The Emperors avenged his wrongs Claudius, on this account, deprived the Rhodians of their franchise.

(2) Chap. xxiii.

(3) St. Paul had always followed the dictates of his conscience, as well in Judaism as in the Church. The first conscience was erroneous—the second enlightened. He could easily justify the second, and the first could not be condemned by his enemies. There was always in his great soul an uprightness of purpose which moved the heart of God. This idea he himself throws out, in his first Epistle to Timothy: "*But I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief,*" (v. 13.)

(4) It was customary, when any one who was questioned by the Magistrates, deviated from the respect due to them, to order him to be struck. Paul did not; and the order was instigated by brutal violence.

That they should strike me!" The bystanders cried;
"Dost thou revile the High Priest of the Lord?"
"Brethren, I knew him not to be the Priest (1)
Of the Most High," respectfully he said;
"For I remember what the law prescribes:
Thou shalt not speak reproachfully against
The ruler of the people." (2) Looking round,
And seeing that the Council was composed
Of Sadducees and Pharisees, alike,
Raising his voice, "Brethren, I am," he cried,
"A Pharisee—of Pharisees the son. (3)
Touching the resurrection of the dead,
And future hope beyond the dreary tomb—
Am I in question called, and stand accused."

A great division in the Council rose,
Upon this doctrine, 'mid the Sadducees

(1) St. Paul did not know him by sight, because he had just arrived at Jerusalem, after an absence of many years. The High Priest must not have been distinguished from the others present, either by the seat he occupied, or by dress; otherwise he would have been recognised. This was a convocation made by the Tribune, in which it is probable the ordinary formalities were not observed, either in regard to the place or to the ceremonial. Who knows but the Tribune himself occupied the first place?

(2) Exod. xxii. 28. What meekness on the part of St. Paul! Especially as it was by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, according to St. Chrysostom, that he made use of the preceding menace.

(3) He retained all that was good in that sect—the faith of the resurrection—and left them all their vices. He and the other Apostles announced a two-fold resurrection: that of Jesus Christ, and that of all mankind—the basis and perfection of the edifice of Christianity.

And Pharisees. The former sect denied
The resurrection, angels, and the soul: (1)
The latter, on the contrary, believed.
The din of controversy louder grew:
Amidst the noise some Pharisees stood up,
And "striving," said: "No evil in this man
We find; and who can tell but that some spirit
Or angel may have spoken unto him?"

Fiercer and hotter the dissension waxed;
And fearing lest, amid the tumult, Paul
In pieces should be torn, the Tribune bade
The soldiers to descend, and from the crowd
To rescue him by force, and lead him up
Into the castle, where he was secured.

The following night, reposing in his cell,
And pondering, sleepless, o'er the ills and pains
Which he was destined to sustain, the Lord
Stood by him, in a vision, and spake thus:
"Be constant—in Jerusalem thou hast
Borne witness of me, so must thou at Rome." (2)

(1) They denied the spirituality of the soul. The animal man believes in the existence of a body only. This stupidity produced paganism, materialism, and we may add, atheism.

(2) It had already been revealed to Paul that he should go to Rome, (chap. xix. 21.) Christ here confirms it; and because he gave testimony of his faith in Jerusalem, he promises that he shall do the same at Rome. One trial is repaid by another; and one combat will be the price of another. Thus does God recompense, in generous souls, one merit by another merit; thus does he multiply their victories, and enrich their crowns.

On the gray mountains day had hardly dawned,
Ere many of the Jews convened, and vowed,
And with united imprecations swore
To eat not, drink not, until Paul be slain.
In this conspiracy were forty men. (1)
These coming to the Ancients and Chief Priests,
Declared: "By vow we—every man—are bound,
With maledictions, nor to eat nor drink,
Till Paul be put to death: to accomplish this,
You and the Council must persuade the Tribune
To bring him forth again, under pretext
Of knowing something more concerning him.
We are all ready to discharge our part;
And ere he reach the Council, on the way
We will surprise him, and our vow fulfil."

But there was one—a fair and gentle youth—
Whose eye was watchful of the treacherous snares
Laid by these wicked men: Paul's nephew he.
He saw the danger, and, with anxious heart,
Gained entrance to the castle, and to Paul,
Magnanimous, the fatal plot revealed.
The voice which in the solitary cell
Had cheered his soul for nobler triumphs yet
Upon the hills of Rome, all present fear
Of being slain extinguished in his breast.
And though no human agency were nigh

(1) It is generally believed that these conspirators—*about* forty in number—were Sadducees. When such men have the power, they cry out, *Massacre the enemy!* when they have not, they allow *all the world liberty of opinion!*

To save him from the danger, Heaven would spread
Its ægis o'er him, and confound his foes.
Yet human means by Providence were given.

Paul heard the tale, composed; and calling one
Of the Centurions, "Take this youth," he said,
"Before the Tribune, for he would reveal
Some secret to him." Who without delay
Brought him before that officer, and told
What Paul had uttered: "Paul, the prisoner,
Desired that I should bring this youth to thee,
Who hath some weighty secret to disclose."

The Tribune, kindly taking by the hand
The ingenuous youth, aside with him retired,
And bade him fearlessly the secret tell.
"'Tis this," he answered. "Many of the Jews
Have formed a plot whereby they may persuade,
With treacherous cunning, thee to bring forth Paul
Upon the morrow, as if to inquire they meant
More certainly concerning him: beware
Lest thou give credence to them; for there lie
Upwards of forty men in ambush, bound
By solemn oath, neither to eat nor drink,
Till they have killed him. All their plans matured,
They merely wait thy answer, in suspense."

The Tribune, charging him to tell no man
That he had thus informed, dismissed the youth.
Sending for two Centurions then, he said:
"Get ready, for the third hour of the night,

Two hundred soldiers, horsemen seventy,
Spearmen two hundred,—to proceed as far
As Cæsarea; beasts, likewise, provide,
And set Paul on, whom carefully escort (1)
To Felix, Governor of that place;" (he feared
The Jews might kill him, and himself be charged
With having—bought by bribery—connived.)
Meanwhile to Felix, in these terms, he wrote:
"To Felix, Governor most excellent,
This letter Claudius Lysias, greeting, sends.
Upon this man the Jews, tumultuous, seized,
Resolved to slay him; but amid the crowds,
With my brave troops, I threw myself, and thus—
Knowing he was a Roman citizen— (2)
I rescued him. Determined, then, to learn
What was their accusation, what his crime,
Before their Council I arraigned the man,
And after due investigation, found
The charges turned on questions of their law;
That of no deed was he impeached, whereby
He should be doomed to prison or to death.

(1) God did not wish St. Paul to become a victim to these infuriated wretches. See how, without appearing to act in the matter, his providence protects and saves the Apostle. Admire and adore the ways of providence.

(2) This was a falsehood. When he rescued Paul from their fury, he was not yet aware that he was a Roman citizen. If we look to ourselves, we will find that self-love causes us to tell such falsehoods in thousands. A false circumstance, if but favorable to ourselves, flows from the lips or the pen like water from its source: it is only necessary that untruth present itself in the garb of beautiful words; and very often it will be preferred to truth not so agreeably set forth

Having since been informed that snares are laid
By some conspirators to take his life,
To thee I have consigned him, before whom
All accusations may be heard.—Farewell."

The troops, as ordered, left Jerusalem
With Paul, whom to Antipatris by night (1)
They took; where to the horsemen leaving him,
Back to the castle they next day returned.
At Cæsarea when the horsemen came,
The letter to the Governor they gave,
And Paul the prisoner to his hands consigned.
The letter Felix cautiously perused;
Then, "To what province Paul belonged?" inquired.
Learning it was Cilicia, "I will hear
Thy statement when the accusers shall have come,"
He said.—Meanwhile commanding Paul to be
In Herod's judgment-hall securely kept.

Five days he there remained. When they expired, (2)

(1) It is supposed that this was the ancient Caphar-salama, mentioned in the first book of Macchabees, vii. 31. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named *Antipatris*, after his father Antipater. It was situated on the Mediterranean Sea, equi-distant from Joppa and Cæsarea, and about seventeen leagues from Jerusalem. So long a journey could not have been made in one night. St. Luke measures a day from one evening to the other—a mode much in use among the Jews, and authorized by the Holy Scriptures.

(2) Chap. xxiv. *Five days after* the beginning of this affair; that is, after St. Paul had been arrested at Jerusalem—which, added to the seven since his arrival at Cæsarea, make the *twelve* days to which he will refer below, (chap. xxiv. 2.)

The High Priest, Ananias, of the Jews,
With several Ancients, and an Orator, (1)
By name Tertullus, came down to depose
Against the prisoner: equipped, before
The Governor's tribunal they appeared.
Paul was arraigned; when thus the charge preferred
Tertullus: "If throughout our favored land
A general peace hath reigned; if numerous ills
Have been removed, we owe it all to thee,
Illustrious Felix! and such blessings claim
Always and everywhere our grateful thanks.
But not too tedious to become, give ear
With thy accustomed clemency, I pray,
To a brief charge: this man now standing here,
Hath been reputed as a public pest.
Where'er the Jews are found, throughout the world,
Among them fierce seditions he hath raised;
And lately through the sect of Nazarenes
Tumult excited, and hath gone about
The holy temple to profane. We seized
Upon his person, therefore, with the intent
Of judging him according to our law. (2)
But Lysias the Tribune rushing in,
Rescued him violently from our hands,

(1) This is a Latin name. It is probable that Tertullus was a Jew, born at Rome, whom the Jews employed as their orator before the Roman governors, who did not understand Hebrew, or Syriac. The first sentence of his speech shows that this man was an haranguer by profession.

(2) Not so: they meant to massacre him without any legal process. This whole speech is a tissue of falsehoods, and will be convincingly confuted by St. Paul himself.

Commanding his accusers before thee
Their charges to allege; of which from them (1)
Thou canst thyself with certainty inform."
Tertullus' statement all the Jews confirmed.

Then Paul, (the Governor motioning to him
That he might answer,) thus undaunted, spake:
"Knowing that thou hast been, for many years,
Judge of this nation, (2) in my own defence
With courage will I answer. Understand,
That twelve years—and not more—have now elapsed,
Since in Jerusalem to adore I went.
Nor ever in the temple was I found
With any one disputing; nor have roused
The people to sedition any where,
Or in the city or the synagogues.
The charges here alleged they cannot prove.
Yet one thing I acknowledge: that I serve

(1) "*Him*," here, is somewhat ambiguous, as it may refer either to Paul or to Lysias. It should be understood of the latter. Felix, it appears, so understood it, for he concluded by saying: "I will hear thee when the Tribune Lysias shall have arrived."

(2) *Judge*—that is to say, governor. The Jews were much in the habit of giving the name of Judge to any magistrate having the sovereign administration of affairs; which might have been handed down from their first Judges, before the appointment of Kings.

St. Paul says that he will plead his cause with the more confidence, *because he knows* that Felix had been a Judge for many years. We cannot see the foundation of this consequence, as it is known that the administration of Felix was but a tissue of murders, injustice, and rapine. Nevertheless, although we do not see it, this must have been a reasonable motive of confidence, be

According to the sect styled *heresy*, (1)
The Father and my God; believing all
Which in the law and prophets is contained;
Hoping in God, as they themselves do hope,
A resurrection of the good and bad.
With this conviction, 'tis my studious care,
Always without offence towards God and men,
A conscience to preserve. For many years,
With alms, and vows, and offerings I came
Among my nation: occupied with these,
They found me in the temple, purified,
But with no tumult and no multitude.
And they, besides, who found me there were Jews (2)
Of Asia, who ought now to face me here,
And in thy presence every charge prefer,
If they have aught against me: or let these
Who are here present speak, if any crime
I have been guilty of, save that I cried,

cause he affirms it: otherwise it would be but a compliment; and assuredly St. Paul was no flatterer.

(1) The words *sect* and *heresy* had not always, among the Jews, the bad meaning we attach to them. Sometimes, however, they had, as we infer from the manner in which St. Paul alludes to them. Let us imitate the example of this great Apostle, and strengthen our souls against the temptations of the world with the hope of the resurrection.

(2) St. Paul dexterously takes advantage of the absence of the Asiatic Jews, that is, those of Ephesus. They were the first, or rather the only witnesses that should be heard, because they were the first to recognise him in the temple, laid hands on him, and excited the people. They wisely kept themselves aloof. Perhaps they feared that the accusation of tumult would fall upon their own heads. A wicked judge is always formidable to the guilty, when he has no interest to be unjust.

Standing among them: 'I am judged to-day,
Touching the resurrection of the dead.'"

Paul spake. Confounded his accusers stood,
And silenced in the Council. Whereupon
Felix, who had a knowledge of this way, (1)
Dismissed them, saying, "Further I will hear,
When Lysias the tribune shall come down."
Though of the prisoner's innocence convinced,
He did not, vacillating, set him free,
As justice and humanity required,
But to the custody intrusted him
Of a Centurion, whom, meanwhile, he bade
To treat Paul gently, nor prevent his friends
From rendering him their soothing ministry.

Some days elapsed, when Felix, with his wife
Drusilla, (she a Jewess was,) returned, (2)
And sent for Paul, and heard him o'er again
Speak of the faith that is in JESUS CHRIST.
Wondering they listened, as in strains sublime,

(1) *This way of life*—that is, Christianity. Felix knew well that its followers were irreproachable.

(2) Drusilla was by birth a Jewess, but of an Idumean race, as she was connected with the family of Herod. Her father was Agrippa I., who beheaded St. John. Her first husband was Azisus, king of Emesa. Felix, fascinated by her beauty, induced her to forsake Azisus, and unite herself to him. With Felix, she was a pagan. Curiosity induced her to hear St. Paul. Suetonius says that Felix had been the husband of three queens. Drusilla perished in an eruption of Vesuvius, together with her son Agrippa by Felix. It was in this same eruption that Pliny the elder was buried.

The Apostle told them of that glorious creed:
But when of justice he began to treat, (1)
And chastity, and judgment after death,
Felix was terrified: "Thou mayest now go,"
He said, "until a more convenient time."

From Paul he labored money to extort;
And for this purpose oft conversed with him.
Two years—the term of Felix—now expired,
And Portius Festus occupied his seat;
But Felix, studious the Jews to please,
Still left the Apostle in his prison bound. (2)

(1) We behold here the magnanimity of St. Paul. His life was at the disposal of Felix, and yet he dares to treat, in his presence, of two points most capable of exciting the indignation of his perverse mind and corrupt heart—chastity and justice. He would have made little impression, if he had stopped there. The most beautiful moral is but a useless speculation, if it be not accompanied by an inevitable judgment, where virtue will be crowned and vice punished. Felix trembled: this was the beginning of grace. His terror caused him to silence Paul—this was the end of it.

(2) If Paul had given him money, he would have set the Apostle at liberty; and because he wished to conciliate the Jews, he left him in prison. But he obtained nothing from Paul, and nothing from the Jews, who sent a deputation to Rome, accusing him in the name of the nation.

He would have fallen had it not been for the credit of his brother Pallas, who, like himself, was an Arcadian by birth, and a slave; but being freed by the Emperor Claudius, Pallas became, by the ascendant which he exercised over his master, the most influential man in the empire; and having obtained the freedom of Felix, raised him to dignity. Afterwards they proclaimed themselves the descendants of the ancient Kings of Arcadia. The people mocked them: but they had the baseness to recognise, by an au-

Now to the province Festus having come, (1)
From Cæsarea to Jerusalem went (2)
After three days; where, by the Chief Priests met,
And by the leading Jews, much against Paul
He heard; all, as a favor, calling out
That he should be commanded to return,
A prisoner, to Jerusalem; laying wait,
Meantime, to cut him off upon the way.
But Festus answered: "Paul hath been detained
At Cæsarea—whither, very soon,
I purpose to repair: let, then, all those
Who have authority among you go,
Armed with their accusations, down with me,
And if the man be guilty, prove his guilt.

About a week did Festus, in effect,
Spend in Jerusalem; whence he returned
To Cæsarea, and, the following day,
The judgment-seat ascending, he arraigned
The prisoner Paul; about whom stood the Jews,
Who—his accusers—from Jerusalem
Had come, objecting many grievous crimes,
Which they could prove not: to whom Paul replied, (3)

thentic act, this ridiculous pretension. When the great are influenced by fear or hope, they become the most grovelling of men.

(1) Chap. xxv.

(2) Cæsarea was the residence of the governors, and in this respect regarded as a Roman province, the capital of Judea.

(3) Festus was perfectly convinced of the innocence of St. Paul, otherwise he would have incontinently condemned him to death. The feelings of the Jews against the Roman power are

"In naught have I against the Jewish law,
Against the holy temple, or against
Cæsar offended." Festus, hoping then
The Jewish people to conciliate,
Demanded: "Art thou willing, Paul, to go
Back to Jerusalem, and duly there,
Before me, of these several things be judged?"
"At Cæsar's judgment-seat I stand," he said,
"And at this judgment-seat should I be tried.
No injury have I done unto the Jews,
As thou well knowest. If I had injured them,
Or had been guilty found of any deed
Worthy of death, I should not fear to die.
If I be innocent of the crimes alleged,
Thou hast no right to hand me o'er to them.
To Cæsar I appeal." (1) Festus, disturbed,
Consulted with the Council, and then said:
"Hast thou appealed to Cæsar? Then to Cæsar
Shalt thou be sent." From his perplexity
Festus was thus delivered,—to absolve
Or to condemn. But little did he know,
That by his conduct he prepared the way
Whereby the prophecy should be fulfilled—
That Paul should carry to the Gentiles far,
To Israel's children, and the kings of earth,

well known; so is the doctrine of submission to all power, inculcated by St. Paul: and yet these same Jews had the hardihood to accuse him of revolting against Cæsar. Passion knows no moderation.

(1) Every Roman citizen, when accused of crime in the provinces, had a right to appeal to the Emperor in person; and, to this end, he was conducted to Rome under a strong guard.

The tidings of the Gospel,—for he was
The vessel of election to the Lord.

Some days passed o'er, when king Agrippa came,
Attended by Bernice, to salute (1)
Festus at Cæsarea. And as there
For several days they tarried, Festus told
The King of Paul. "A certain man," he said,
"Is here by Felix left a prisoner,
Of whom, when lately at Jerusalem,
I heard much sore complaint from the Chief Priests
And Ancients of the people, calling loud
For condemnation on him. I replied,
The Roman laws and usages forbid
That any citizen should be condemned,
Till his accusers meet him face to face,
And he have liberty in his defence
To speak, and clear himself of every charge.

"They came as summoned. And without delay
Mounting the judgment-seat, I ordered him
To be arraigned. The accusers, too, appeared,
But charged him with no crime whereby his guilt

(1) The young Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa, brother of Drusilla, of whom we have spoken before, and of Berenice, or Bernice, who was then the widow of his uncle Herod, King of Chaldea. She then espoused Ptolemon, King of Cilicia, whom she deserted, and became the mistress of Titus, who would have married her, had he not been prevented by the murmurs of the Roman people. Every age, alas! is but the repetition of the crimes of its predecessor. How many have we not to deplore, similar to that of Berenice, in the midst of Christianity!

Might be established. All they could allege,
Was touching certain questions and disputes
Of their own superstition, (1) and of one
Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be
Alive. Unable, therefore, to decide
In questions of this nature, I proposed
That to Jerusalem he should proceed,
And there upon these several heads be judged.
But Paul to Cæsar's hearing hath appealed.
And I gave orders that he be confined,
Until to Cæsar he be duly sent." (2)

"A wondrous character must this Paul be,"
Returned Agrippa. "Nor will I conceal

(1) Was it not a want of respect for Agrippa, to style *superstition* the religion he professed? Or rather, did not Festus show the little consideration in which the Roman governors held these petty things, whom the Emperors made and unmade at pleasure?

He judged Paul guiltless, on account of the little importance he set upon the chief point of accusation. In this particular he was mistaken. It was a capital affair; and if it had not been true that Jesus was living, Paul would have deserved death, as a disturber of the public peace, and a declared aggressor of a religion of which God was the author. But a pagan could not understand this.

(2) Every one knows that all the Emperors were called by the name of Cæsar and Augustus. The present was Nero—but in the beginning of his reign, before he became the persecutor of Christianity, and a monster in human shape. The sword which was polluted with innocent blood, he at last turned against himself, as *Vaniere* sings:

In sua convertit ferrum præcordia, postquam
Vix alium tollat quem ferus ensis habet.

That I would also hear the man myself."
Festus replied: "To-morrow thou shalt hear him.'

Bright shone the day upon the columns tall
Which stood, majestic and erect, before
The hall of audience, when, with gorgeous pomp,
Agrippa and Bernice, with a train
Of Tribunes, and the chief men of the place,
Magnificently entered. Paul was brought
By Festus' order; and sublimely meek
And grandly humble, stood he in that glare.

Then Festus: "King Agrippa, and all ye
Who are here present with us, you behold
This famous man, concerning whom the Jews
Complained to me when at Jerusalem;
Urging his condemnation; crying out,
That he should live no longer. I have found
Nothing that he hath done worthy of death.
But to Augustus as he hath appealed,
To Rome he shall be sent: yet have I naught
Decisive to the Emperor to write. (1)
Wherefore amidst you I have brought him forth,
And in thy presence, king Agrippa, first,
That he may be examined: for to me
Unreasonable it seemeth and unjust
To send a prisoner, and not signify
The crime precise of which he stands accused."

(1) In Latin, *Domino*. The title *Lord* was given to the Emperors when addressing them, or writing to them, as we see from the letters of Pliny to Trajan. Augustus refused the epithet

Agrippa then, addressing Paul, returned: (1)
"Thou art permitted for thyself to speak."
When, stretching forth his hand, with mien inspired,
His answer Paul began: "I deem myself, (2)
O King Agrippa, happy on this day,
That I can speak before thee of the things
Whereof the Jews accuse me;—the more so,
As both the customs and the questions all
That are among the Jews thou knowest well:
Wherefore, I pray thee, patiently give ear.
My life, indeed, from early youth hath been
With my own nation in Jerusalem,
As all the Jews do know; for from that time,
They must admit, (would they but testify,)
I lived according to the more sure sect
Of our religion, a strict Pharisee.
And subject now to judgment do I stand,
For hoping in the promise by the Lord (3)

through modesty: now-a-days it has become so common, that every plebeian expects it. Times and things change.

(1) Chap. xxvi.

(2) The appeal being admitted, St. Paul had no judges here. Agrippa induced him to speak, merely to have the pleasure of hearing him, and Festus, in order to elicit some explanation which he might communicate to the Emperor. Hence he does not address Festus, as he would have been obliged to do, if the Governor had still been his judge. Festus, no doubt, desired, by way of compliment, that all the honor of the conference should be given to the King, who was his guest, and for whose gratification it was intended. St. Paul did not suffer so auspicious an opportunity to pass unimproved.

(3) The promise of the Messiah, who was to be the liberator and Saviour of his people.

Made to our fathers, unto which our tribes,
Serving him day and night, expect to come.
'Tis for this hope, O king, I am accused.
Why is it thought a thing incredible, (1)
That God should raise the dead to life again?
I, too, was blinded once; nay, I believed
It was my duty many things to do
Against the name of Him of Nazareth.
Which at Jerusalem I did; and many saints
Shut up in prison, having power obtained
From the Chief Priests; and when to death condemned,
The sentence I exultingly announced.
Oft, by inflicting punishments severe
In every synagogue, reckless, I strove
To force them to blaspheme; (2) and yet more mad,
Pursued them even unto foreign towns.
Wherefore, with full power and approval armed
By the Chief Priests, I started for Damascus.
While on my route, at mid-day, I perceived,

(1) It has been believed that these words were addressed to those in the assembly who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and not to the Pharisees, who believed it. St. Paul might have addressed both one and the other. To the first he signified, "You are in contradiction with yourselves, if, acknowledging an all-powerful God, you do not admit his power to raise up the dead." To the second he signified, "You are inconsistent, if, believing the general resurrection, you deny, without examining, the particular resurrection of Jesus Christ. Following your principles, you should not deny without investigating the proofs."

(2) That is, he had the misfortune to make both martyrs and apostates; a subject of humiliation and regret.

O king, a light more brilliant than the sun,
Blazing from heaven about me and the men
Who journeyed in my company: when all
Were stricken suddenly down upon the ground.
A voice I heard, then, in the Hebrew tongue: (1)
'*Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me thus?*'
Against the goad 'tis hard for thee to kick.
'Who art thou, Lord?' I asked. The voice replied:
'*Jesus, whom thou dost persecute: but rise*
And stand upon thy feet. I have appeared,
A minister to make thee of those things
Which thou hast seen, and witness, too, of those
Wherein I will appear; delivering thee
Out of the people and the nations' hands
To which I send thee now, their eyes to open,
That they from darkness unto light may be
Converted, and from Satan's power to God,
That pardon of their sins they may receive,
By faith that is in me, and have a lot
Among the saints.' To this celestial sight
I was not skeptic, (2) king Agrippa; but
First to the people of Damascus preached,
As heaven commanded;—at Jerusalem,
Throughout Judea, to the Gentile race,

(1) St. Paul, it appears from this expression, did not address Agrippa in Hebrew, but in Greek or Latin.

(2) The Greek word (ἀπειθὴς) signifies something more than *not incredulous:* it implies not only assent, but likewise obedience. We remarked above, that St. Paul had resided twice at Damascus, and that he passed the interval—not less than two years—in Arabia, perhaps leading a solitary life: for among the places where he began to preach, Arabia is not named.

Penance, conversion to the Lord, and fruits
Worthy of penance. This is all the cause
Why in the temple I was seized upon,
With tumult, by the Jews, who then conspired
To slay me: but with God's almighty aid
I stand, unto this day, to small and great,
Witnessing, and saying openly those things
Which all the prophets had announced of yore,
And Moses, in due time should come to pass,—
That CHRIST should suffer, and should rise again,
First-born among the dead, and light divine
To Israel's children and the Gentiles show."

While in this strain of eloquence inspired,
Paul still was arguing, with amazement struck
Festus exclaimed: "Thou art beside thyself!
Yea, too much learning, Paul, doth make thee mad!"
"I am not mad, most excellent Felix! no:
I speak the words of truth and soberness.
For of these things of which I tell, the King
Well knoweth, and with confidence to him
I also speak; from whom they are not hid—
For in a corner they have not been done."

Then turning to Agrippa, "King," he asked,
"Believest thou the prophets? Yes, I know
That thou believest." Half convinced, the King,
Starting with admiration, answered: "Paul,
A little more, and thou persuadest me
To be a Christian!" "Would to God, O King!"
Paul answered, "in a little and in much,

That thou, and all who hear my voice this day,
Should as I am become, except these bands." (1)

Amid these ardent aspirations breathed
By the pure zeal of Paul, the assembly rose:
The King, the Governor, Bernice, and
The glittering train around them. As they left,
Among themselves discussing: "Naught," they said,
"Hath this man done worthy of death or chains."
Agrippa owned to Festus: "Had he not
Appealed to Cæsar, he might be discharged."

'Twas now determined into Italy (2)
That Paul by sea should instantly proceed,
With other prisoners, under Julius,
Centurion of the cohort which was called
Augusta. We embarked on board a ship (3)
Of Adrumetum, and the anchor weighed,
We sailed along the Asiatic coasts,
The Macedonian, Aristarchus, still (4)

(1) Why except his chains, since he regarded it an honor to bear them for Jesus Christ? For the very reason which Christ himself alleged: *All will not understand*, (Matt. xix.,) and pearl must not be thrown to swine. Besides, he spoke to men who did not appreciate the high privilege of suffering in the cause of Christianity; and, therefore, he longed for the happy consummation of their conversion—of their enjoying all the consolations, without being subject to the numberless trials in the faith of Jesus, which he had undergone.

(2) Chap. xxvii.

(3) *Adrumetum* was a port in Africa.

(4) He had followed Paul to Ephesus, then accompanied him in the voyage he made into Macedonia and Greece, continued

Continuing with us. On the following day
We touched at Sidon: the Centurion,
Humanely treating Paul, permitted him
To see his friends, and for his wants provide.
Thence spreading sail, we shaped our onward course
Under the isle of Cyprus, for the winds
Were adverse. Stretching, then, across the sea
That through Pamphylia and Cilicia rolls,
We came to Lystra—that of Lycia:— (1)
A vessel from Alexandria there,
Sailing for Italy, we found, on which
By Julius we were placed. For many days
We made but little headway, and scarce reached
Gnidus; the wind not suffering us, we then
Sailed by Salmone, near the Cretan coast; (2)
Which hardly weathering, we at length attained
A certain port, *Goodhavens* styled, near which
The city of Thalassa boldly towers.
Long there we tarried, for it was unsafe
On sea to venture, as the fast was o'er. (3)

to Jerusalem from Cæsarea, and finally was imprisoned with him at Rome. He quitted him only when, having been ordained Bishop, St. Paul sent him to Thessalonica, where he died; and is venerated as a Saint in the Roman Martyrology, on the 4th of August.

(1) *That of Lycia*, in order to distinguish it from Lystra in Lycaonia, (see chap. xiv.) Ancient geographers do not mention Lystra in Lycia. In the Greek MSS. it is *Myra* instead of Lystra.

(2) *Gnidus*, a town built on a promontory of Asia Minor, now called *Stadia*. Crete is at present styled Candia. Cape Salmone, the easterly point of the island, has preserved its name. Of the other places here mentioned, no traces remain.

(3) This was the fast of the Expiation, which occurred about

Meanwhile Paul solaced and advised them thus:
"Ye men, our voyage now begins to be
With injury and much damage to ourselves,
And to the ship and lading." He proposed
That for more prosperous weather they should wait.
The pilot and the master of the ship (1)
Julius consulted, and on them relied
More than on Paul; and as the port was deemed
Unfit to winter in, the greatest part
Counselled to sail thence, if, by any means,
Phœnice they might reach—a Cretan port,
Looking, on one side, towards the south and west,
And on the other towards the west and north.
A south wind gently springing up, 'twas thought
Expedient to depart; so we set sail
From Asson, and along the coast of Crete
We glided, when soon after there arose,
Pregnant with storms, against the isle a wind
Called Euro-aquilo, (2) in which the ship

the time of the September equinox. To say that the fast was over, was to signify that the season had set in when navigation was dangerous.

(1) As long as he did not regard St. Paul as inspired, it was the part of prudence to rely more on the pilot and captain than on him: but he soon found out that the knowledge that comes from heaven is more certain than that derived from our own reasoning and experience.

(2) In Greek, Εὐροκλύδων, which signifies a stormy wind from the east, without determining whether from the northeast or southeast. But the author of the Vulgate, who lived in those times, could not be ignorant of the precise nature of this wind, and calls it northeast. This is an important point, for it adds great weight to the common opinion that the vessel landed at

Was furiously caught: against its force,
Unable to bear up, we let her scud
Before the gales tempestuous, and were driven
Under the isle of Cauda, (1) where well nigh
The boat was lost ; which with great labor saved
And taken up, we had recourse to helps, (2)
And girding tight the vessel underneath
With cables strong, lest she might strike upon (3)
The quicksands near ; the sail-yards taking down, (4)
Left her to struggle with the driving winds.
All night the tempest lashed her ; and when day,
Mantled in cloud and storm, arose again,
The vessel, battered by the elements,

Malta, and not at Melida, which is in the gulf of Venice. We need but cast a glance over the map, to see that it is impossible for a vessel, driven on by so violent a northeast wind as to render it necessary to leave her to its fury,—impossible, I say, for that vessel to be blown on the coast of the isle of Crete, in the gulf of Venice.

(1) This was, perhaps, the small island to the west of Crete, called now Goza.

(2) *They used helps*, is the literal translation both from the Greek and Latin. It is ambiguous, and leaves a doubt whether it means that they made use of every aid the ship could afford, or that all the passengers were put in requisition, to manœuvre her with the sailors, as occurs in such storms.

(3) The cables with which the vessel was girt could not prevent it from striking, but could prevent it from going to pieces.

(4) The Latin text has *submisso vase*, which is confirmed by the Greek. Most interpreters translate *vase* by the *great mast*, (the "sail-yard" of the Douay version ;) others by *the sail*, which, when it is inflated by the wind, seems to contain it in its concavity. The great sheet which was let down from heaven, in the vision of Peter, is called *vas*. This seems to confirm the second translation.

To ease and lighten, overboard they threw
The cargo. Yet three days the storm increased,
Till with their own hands they were forced to cast
The tackling to the deep. Nor sun nor stars
Shone through the day, or glittered through the night.
Shrouded in gloom, the haggard skies were black;
The fury of the storm no power could stem;
All hope of safety perished in their breasts.
No human aid could rescue them from wreck—
Their fate seemed sealed—inevitably sealed,
Had there not been at hand one friend of heaven,
One powerful intercessor for them all.
Paul raised his voice, amid the roaring sea,
While all were spent with hunger and fatigue:
"Ye should, indeed, have hearkened, O ye men,
While still at Crete: I warned you not to sail,
And thereby bring this damage and this loss
Upon us all. But yet be of good cheer:
The ship will perish, but we shall be saved.
For by my side an Angel of the God
Whom I adore stood near, this night, and said:
'*Fear not, O Paul: thou must be brought before*
Cæsar: and for thy sake, behold! the Lord
Will spare the lives of all who with thee now
Are tossed upon these billows.' Courage, sirs,
For on the word of God my faith is fixed:
Upon a certain island we shall land." (1)

(1) It was not from humor, much less vanity, that he recalled to their minds the counsel he had given them As if he had said: "You would not believe me when I announced the misfortune that has overtaken you; at least believe me now, while I

The fourteenth night now brooded o'er the dark
And turbid Adriatic; on whose sea (1)
Our ship was laboring, when amid the gloom,
Straining their gaze, the ship-men deemed they saw
The shadowy peaks of land; sounding, forthwith,
They measured twenty fathoms; then again,
A little farther, and fifteen they found.
When, fearing on the breakers to be dashed,
Four anchors from the vessel's stern they threw,
Longing, impatient, for the dawn of day.

Meanwhile the ship-men, hoping to escape,
Feigning to cast the anchors from the prow,
Let down the boat. "Except within the ship
These men remain," Paul to the soldiers said
And the Centurion, "we cannot be saved." (2)
They now at length believed him. From the boat
The soldiers cut the ropes, and let her fall.

announce your rescue, which heaven has promised." He was speaking to idolaters, and hence the words, *whom I adore:* the true God, not like the deities of paganism. If that God would save them, *they* should acknowledge no other. The name of the island on which they were to land was not, perhaps, revealed by the Angel.

(1) This presents some difficulty with regard to their landing at Malta; for it is only the gulf of Venice that is called the Adriatic sea. But Strabo, a contemporary of St. Paul, informs us that it then included, besides the gulf of Venice, the Ionian and Sicilian seas, in which the island of Malta is situated.

(2) The accomplishment of the divine promise depended upon the remaining of the sailors in the ship, not absolutely, but because God, who had resolved to save them all, resolved to do so by natural means. What a magnificent example does not St. Paul present! Like Moses, he raised his hands to heaven, while

When light again broke in the stormy skies,
Paul urged them to take meat. "This is," he said,
"The fourteenth day that ye have anxious been,
And, fasting, naught have eaten; wherefore take
Some nourishment for health's sake: not a hair
Shall perish of the head of any one." (1)
He spake: and taking bread, gave thanks to God
Before them all, and then began to eat. (2)
Their courage quickening, they, likewise, took food.
All being satisfied, they eased the ship,
By casting to the billows all the wheat.
Day broadened, and the highlands were descried;
The coast they knew not—but a certain creek
Was nigh that had a shore, to which they thought,
If it was possible, to thrust the ship,
They raised the anchors, loosed the "rudder-bands,"
Again themselves committing to the sea.
Then hoisting up the mainsail to the wind,
They headed towards the shore; but having struck
Against a strip of land, where two seas meet,
The ship was run aground, and sticking fast,

the sailors were at work. They whose sole occupation it is to pray, if they pray with piety and fervor, are more useful to their country than others whose arms and minds are occupied in its service.

(1) That is, they had hardly eaten any thing, on account of their terror, which destroys appetite, and perhaps, too, the nausea created by the great agitation of the vessel. The number of souls in the vessel amounted to two hundred and seventy-six.

(2) Human respect often prevents Christians from performing their duties. St. Paul did not shrink from them in the company of idolaters. Does not God nourish us? Why, then, be ashamed to acknowledge his goodness before the world?

Deep in the sand remained immovable;
And soon, lashed by the fury of the waves,
The stern broke into pieces; whereupon
The soldiers counselled that the prisoners
(Lest, swimming from the wreck, some might escape,
And they be censured) should be put to death.
But the Centurion, willing to save Paul,
Opposed the measure, ordering, meanwhile,
Those who could swim to plunge into the sea,
And make for land. The rest, some upon boards,
Others on things belonging to the ship,
Were carried: and thus did it come to pass,
That every soul got safely to the land. (1)

When from the jaws of death we had escaped, (2)
We learned the island was Melita called:
There the barbarians no small courtesy (3)
Extended to us all. Kindling a fire—
For it was cold, and rain in torrents fell—
They hastened to refresh us and to warm.
It chanced, as Paul some fagots had picked up
And laid upon the fire, that from the heat
A viper gliding, fastened on his hand. (4)

(1) Thus the prediction of St. Paul was verified—that the ship should be lost, but all the passengers and sailors should be saved.

(2) Chap. xxviii.

(3) The word *barbarians*, in its first acceptation, means simply *strangers*. The Greeks and Romans applied this epithet to all nations who spoke a language different from their own. These were probably Africans, who had established themselves in Malta, near the coast of Africa.

(4) There are still serpents in Malta, but not poisonous

This beast when hanging the barbarians saw,
They, terror-stricken, said: "Beyond all doubt
A murderer is this man; whom, though the deep
He hath escaped, yet vengeance still pursues." (1)
But when he shook the viper off, unharmed,
They saw him swell not from the poisonous sting,
Nor suddenly fall dead before their eyes,
As they expected, having changed their minds,
They now imagined that he was a God. (2).

The chief man of the island, Publius named, (3)
Held large possessions; who most courteously
Received us in his house, where we remained
During three days. Sick of a fever lay
And spent with dysentery, at this time,

Whether the change is to be attributed to a miraculous influence, since the period when St. Paul was there, or not, it is not important to inquire.

(1) The sentiment of vindictive justice is common to the human breast. The impious man may deny it, but he cannot help fearing it.

(2) The people know no medium: they pass from one extreme to the other with surprising rapidity. Those of Lystra took St. Paul for a god, and the next day they stoned him. These regard him first as a murderer, and afterwards honor him as a deity.

(3) Publius is a Roman name. He is called, in Greek, the *first man*, and in Latin, *the prince* of the island. He was probably Governor, or first Magistrate, under the Prætor of Sicily, on which Malta depended. We are not informed of the fruits which the preaching of St. Paul produced in Malta. The tradition is, that he converted the whole country. This may be presumed from the zeal of the Apostle, and the blessing attached to his mission, especially among the Gentiles, as well as from the honors which were bestowed on him by the people of the island.

His father, whom Paul kindly visited;
And having prayed, upon the lingering man
Imposed his hands, and healed him on the spot.
The tidings of this wonder spread abroad,
And all the sick throughout the island came
To be restored to health—and all were cured.
Wherefore great honors we received through Paul;
And when about departing from their shores,
With all things necessary they supplied
Our vessel for the voyage. We embarked—
Having sojourned three months there—in a ship,
Which, too, had wintered in this island, from
Alexandria; whose broad sign displayed
The Castors. (1) Syracuse we quickly made, (2)
And tarried there three days; then near the shore
Coasting along, to Rhegium we came. (3)
Whence, on the second day, fresh southern winds
Filling our sails, we made Puteoli; (4)
Where finding brethren, with them seven days
We were desired to tarry. Then towards Rome
Our way we bent. Whence, of us having heard,
To the Appian Forum and the *Taverns Three* (5)
The brethren came to meet us. Seeing these,

(1) Divinities of Rome, supposed to be favorable to navigators. Their images were painted on the prow or stern of the ship which took their name.

(2) The distance from Malta to Syracuse is short; but from *Melita* very long.

(3) A city of Calabria.

(4) A maritime town, three leagues from Naples. Here they disembarked, and went by land to Rome.

(5) Small villages, which are no longer to be traced.



Bridge of St. Angelo Rome

Paul rendered thanks to God, and felt his breast
Glowing with courage, and inflamed with zeal.

And now the walls of Rome—imperial Rome—
Approached the undaunted prisoner. Her proud gates
Open, and close upon him—for the first
And for the last time. There, amid the pride,
The glory, the magnificence, the wealth,
The power, the luxury, the pomp of Rome
Stands Paul, undazzled, undismayed;—the glare,
Of wisdom, of philosophy, of wit
At Athens he had faced, and preached the God
Which e'en the Areopagus knew not.

Now to the mighty Capitol he wends
His way magnificent, amid the fanes
And gorgeous temples of the immortal gods.
The seven hills shall echo to his voice,
The Tiber's banks repeat it, and the groves
Umbrageous of Egeria shall hear,
With sacred reverence, of the name of CHRIST.

He comes, a wanderer from far-off climes,
A prisoner bound, but by the Spirit sent,
To teach the Senate and the Priests of Rome,
That Jove is not their god, nor Juno queen;
That all their deities must yield to Him
Who on the tree of Golgotha expired,
But lives, resuscitated from the dead.
A dwell'ng—in the midst of those vast piles

Of pagan grandeur—was allotted him;
Where he was suffered to remain alone,
Save with the soldier, placed to guard him there.

Three days in solitude he spent and peace,
Musing upon the destiny of Rome—
The focus now of superstition vast—
To be transformed (he read the omnipotent
Decrees of Heaven) into the capital
And centre of religion. That pure ray,
Which had already beamed upon the cloud
Of paganism—enkindled by the hands
Of Peter, once the fisherman obscure
Of Galilee—was, with a light divine
Of truth and wisdom, to dispel the gloom
That brooded on the city, and the WORLD. (1)

Paul, indefatigable still, despite

(1) Rome had been visited by Peter previously to the arrival of Paul; and the *brethren* or Christians were numerous, as he himself testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, declaring that their faith was spoken of all over the world. The focus of ancient pagan superstition became, in the lapse of time, the centre of Christian truth and unity. With lofty eloquence St. Leo the Great exults in the miraculous change which God wrought in that mistress of the earth.

Paul was kindly treated, perhaps, for two reasons. One was, on account of the letter of Festus, who must have assured the Emperor that he did not find him guilty of any crime. The other, of the report given by the Centurion Julius, who became his admirer, and probably his neophyte, who could not but speak of him in the most exalted terms. Thus were accomplished the designs of God, who wished that he should be a prisoner, but yet free enough to labor for the propagation of the faith.



His hardships and his labors, in whose breast
The fire of zeal glowed quenchless and intense,
Assembled round him all the leading Jews,
And thus addressed them: "Without any cause—
Men, brethren, having nothing done against
The people, or the customs of our fathers,
I was made prisoner in Jerusalem,
And then delivered to the Romans' hands,
Who, having heard the charges, and inquired
Into the grounds on which they were alleged,
Would have released me—for no cause they found
Why I should suffer death;—but as the Jews
Opposed their just decision, I was forced—
Not that I meant my nation to accuse—
To appeal to Cæsar. Wherefore did I long
My case to state before you:—with these chains,
Because of Israel's hope, have I been bound."

Attentively they hearkened, and replied:
"No letters from Judea, touching thee
Or thy imprisonment, have we received;
Nor from our brethren who have hither come,
Heard we of any evil thou hast done.
But from thyself we now desire to learn
Thy sentiments; for as regards this sect,
We know that it is gainsaid everywhere."

A day was designated, when in crowds
They flocked about his lodgings. He appeared,
Victorious in his irons and sublime.
Then he began God's kingdom to expound,

Arraying testimonies of the truth,
And from the ancient prophets, and the law
Of Moses, proving Jesus to be CHRIST.
From morn till eve, the crowds suspended hung
On Paul's amazing eloquence; his words
Fell with conviction on the minds of some,
But fruitlessly on others: 'mongst themselves,
Agreeing not, contentious, they withdrew;
And as they went, Paul added one word more:
"Well, through Isaiah, did the Holy Ghost
Speak to our fathers: '*To this people go,*
And say to them: Your ears, indeed, shall hear,
But ye shall understand not; you shall see,
And yet perceive not: for this people's heart
Is gross become; and they have sealed their ears,
And closed their eyes, lest they should hear or see,
And thus should be converted, and be healed.' (1)
Then be it known to you, that God hath sent
Salvation to the Gentiles; *they* will hear."
The Jews, disputing fiercely with themselves,
Departed from him. For two years entire
In his own rented lodgings Paul abode,
Where all who came he carefully received,
Preaching to them the kingdom of the Lord,
And, unrestrained and with full confidence,
Teaching all things concerning JESUS CHRIST.

(1) Isaiah vi. 9. The small number of believers might have been led astray by the incredulity of the greater number. Hence they were fortified against this danger by the assurance that the incredulity of the majority was foretold; and for this reason it was that this prophecy of Isaiah has been repeated six times in the New Testament.

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING WHAT HAS BEEN GATHERED FROM THE EPISTLES OF ST PAUL CONCERNING WHAT PASSED DURING THE TWO YEARS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT, UNTIL HIS DELIVERY.

He was detained as a prisoner in his lodgings; but this prison became a public school of Christianity, by the great concourse which the desire of seeing and hearing so great a man, attracted to it. "In chains though I be," he says, "I am an ambassador for Jesus Christ, so that therein I may be bold to speak according as I ought." (1) By some it was feared that his captivity might have proved an obstacle to the progress of religion—but it was the contrary. "Now, brethren," he wrote to the Philippians, (2) "I desire you should know that the things which have happened to me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds are made manifest in Christ, in all the court, and in all other places." Conversions were the consequence, and they multiplied so far as to form a kind of domestic church, even in the most dissolute of

(1) Pro quo legatione fungor in catenâ, ita ut in ipso audeam, sicut oportet me, loqui. (Eph. vi. 20.)

(2) Scire, autem, vos volo, fratres, quia circa me sunt, magis ad profectum venerunt Evangelii: ita ut vincula mea manifesta fierent in Christo in omni prætorio, et in cæteris hominibus. (Philip. i. 12, 13.)

all courts. When he salutes the Philippians, on the part of the Saints at Rome, he names especially some who were in the palace of Cesar. (1)

His success procured co-operation: some through true zeal; others through a secret jealousy, which they covered with an apparent zeal—as he himself informs us. "And many of the brethren in the Lord, growing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear. Some, indeed, even out of envy and contention; but some, also, for good-will preach Christ; some out of charity, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; and some out of contention preach Christ not sincerely, supposing that they raise affliction to my bands. But what then? So that by all means, whether by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached: in this I also rejoice; yea," adds this admirable man, as far elevated above the weaknesses of humanity as heaven is above the earth, "and I will rejoice." (2)

It is thus, that with the merit of what he himself did, he rendered his own the merit of what was done by

(1) Salutant vos omnes sancti, maximè autem qui de Cæsaris domo sunt. (Philip. iv. 22.)

(2) Et plures e fratribus in Domino confidentes vinculis meis, abundantius auderent sine timore verbum Dei loqui. Quidam quidem, et propter invidiam et contentionem; quidam autem et propter bonam voluntatem Christum prædicant. Quidam ex charitate; scientes quoniam in defensionem Evangelii positus sum: quidam autem ex contentione Christum annuntiant non sincère, existimantes pressuram se suscitare vinculis meis. Quid enim? Dum omni modo, sive per occasionem, sive per veritatem, Christus annuntietur; et in hoc gaudeo, sed et gaudebo. (Philip. i. 14—18.)

others, whatever the intention by which they were actuated. His zeal was not confined to Rome or Italy. He was in chains, but, to use his own expression, the word of God was not. (1) From the midst of his irons, he sent it to the remotest countries; and from the darkness of his obscure abode, he enlightened all nations and all times. For it was during his captivity at Rome that he wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Laodiceans, (which has not come down to us;) the second to Timothy, that to Philemon, and to the Hebrews; in the last of which he shows, with as much depth as magnificence, the infinite superiority of the new over the ancient law; the divinity of its Founder; the excellence of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, who, while he is the eternal Pontiff, is, at the same time, the everlasting Victim.

If he received succor and consolation at the hands of the brethren, they were, on the other side, a subject of great trials to him. Many quitted him; some from lassitude, others from inconstancy. Besides the envious who spoke against him, he had also declared persecutors, such as Alexander the coppersmith, who did him much harm. (2) The Apostle delivered him over to Satan, with Hymeneus, for teaching perverse doctrines. (3) In order to avenge himself on Paul, that wicked man made use of every effort to bring upon him the infliction of capital punishment. But what

(1) Verbum Dei non est alligatum. (2 Tim. ii. 9.)

(2) Alexander ærarius multa mala mihi ostendit. (2 Tim. iv. 14.)

(3) 1 Tim. i. 20.

most afflicted him, was to see himself abandoned by all his friends, under circumstances in which they should have stood by him. The first time he had to speak in his own defence, no one dared to accompany him. He prays God to forgive them for this weakness; while their desertion does not discourage him. "But the Lord," he says, "stood by me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching may be accomplished, and that all the Gentiles may hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." (1) By this expression he designates the Emperor Nero, whose cruelty surpassed that of the most ferocious animals. He finished, however, by being devoured: but this happened nine years later, when, on the same day and for the same cause, he and the head of the Apostles, PETER, sealed, with their blood, the glorious testimony they had given of the Lord Jesus Christ;—to whom be honor, glory, and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

(1) In primâ meâ defensione nemo mihi adfuit, sed omnes me dereliquerunt. Non illis imputetur. Dominus, autem, mihi astitit, et confortavit me, ut per me prædicatio impleatur, et audiant omnes Gentes: et liberatus sum de ore Leonis. (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.)

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